

What Happens to the Radical Potential of Gender Mainstreaming?

Problems of Implementation and Institutionalisation in Gendered Organisations

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is entirely my own work and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

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Abstract

Rapidly spreading in popularity over the past fifteen years, gender mainstreaming has been adopted worldwide by state, supra state and international organizations as the ‘most modern’ policy for ensuring gender equality. Yet, there is general agreement that it has not succeeded in achieving its radical potential. In this thesis, I bring together policy literature on bureaucracies, the civil service, and gender mainstreaming with work done on gender, work and organizations as a way to better understand the partial success and uneven implementation and institutionalization of what is supposedly a transformational agenda.

To date, gender scholars have underplayed the ‘stickiness’ of gender and its effects upon actors and everyday practices in political and state organizations. I argue that the ‘stickiness’ of gender in organisations presents a formidable obstacle to the implementation and institutionalization of gender mainstreaming. I also argue that insufficient attention has been paid to the ‘embodied costs’ of actors who act as internal gender mainstreaming advocates both in terms of the costs to the individuals and the impact of these costs on the prospects for the successful implementation and institutionalisation of a radical change agenda. Through an ethnographic examination of the Scottish Executive from 2006-2007, I probe the analytic question framing this thesis: *what happens to the radical potential of gender mainstreaming during its implementation and institutionalisation in governmental bureaucracies?*

Using the sociological method of institutional ethnography, I provide evidence of ways that continued reliance on highly committed individuals and everyday bureaucratic practices continue to limit the radical success of gender mainstreaming at the Scottish Executive. I contend that the radical promise of gender mainstreaming is hindered because it is a strategy which must work within the confines of fossilised norms manifested in masculinist bureaucracies and because it is paradoxically predicated on changing bureaucratic norms through the use of the same bureaucratic practices it attempts to transform. By examining the everyday experience of ‘doing’ gender mainstreaming in the case of a sub-state government in the UK, the Scottish Executive, I trace the ways that the radical promises of the gender mainstreaming agenda become diluted.

The thesis examines challenges to the gender mainstreaming agenda and adds to wider discussions about the plausibility of gender mainstreaming’s radical potential. In addition, my thesis moves forward methodological discussions in feminist politics by demonstrating

the possibility of using institutional ethnography in political science as an effective way to operationalise, analyze and link multiple levels of politics from a gendered perspective. My analysis of local experiences of gender mainstreaming provides insight into the international trend of gender mainstreaming because it takes seriously the experiences of individuals who work within organizations, the role of organizations in limiting change agendas, and the international context within which the mainstreaming strategy unfolds.

Introduction: What Happens to the Radical Potential of Gender Mainstreaming? Problems of Implementation and Institutionalisation of Change in Gendered Organisations

Walking through the iron gates to the entrance of Victoria Quay, one of the main buildings of the Scottish Executive, for the first time is a bit overwhelming. Like many government buildings, it is built both to house those doing the work of running the country and to inspire and make a person reflect upon the nature of that government and that country. Victoria Quay is a grand, modern building of steel and glass set amidst the docks of Leith. The Scottish flag often whips in the wind over the entrance, sometimes accompanied by the British flag or that of the EU, depending on why may be a guest at VQ that day. You enter the building through turnstile doors and are greeted by an efficient yet friendly crew of security guards and reception staff. If you are a guest, you are asked to sign in and they call your contact to “come down and get you.” As a worker in the building, your security pass allows you to pass through another set of turnstile glass doors to enter the rotunda after checking the security warning of the day – ranging from low to highest. That always serves as a reminder to me that I work in a place of government, a place with the aim of serving the people but a place that may also become the target of violence and outrage among the people. It can be a sobering thought. Yet, it is also exciting to be a part of government, of the world where policy and practice come together, where work is politicized and politics is work.

It may seem curious that as a feminist international relations scholar interested in the ways international institutions work, I decided to study the inner workings of the Scottish Executive, the executive branch of a small, sub-national, devolved government in the UK. Admittedly, at times I myself wondered why this particular locale was important in the grand scheme of international relations and questioned my own decision to stay in Scotland for my fieldwork rather than travel to New York and the UN, or Brussels and the EU, or any other global city and its major international institution. The answer, like many in PhD research, is partly practical. I got the chance to work for a summer in the Executive’s Equalities Research branch. In exchange for updating their website, I could conduct a pilot study and try out

ethnography as a method for operationalising gender. I would use the summer to set up my fieldwork ‘somewhere else’ and jet away to do it in some ‘other’ institution. That was the plan, anyway.

What actually happened was that I was drawn into the workings of the Scottish Executive, into the day-to-day world of those who worked on Equalities research in support of the Equalities policy unit. I updated the website and found links to various organisations focused on a plethora of equalities-related issues in Scotland¹. I did research for the new policy for Scotland with an Ageing Population². I found out that census classifications for race are extremely politicised. And I realised that Scottish public bodies like the Executive were about to be required to introduce something called the Gender Equality Duty, which was the latest in a series of efforts to mainstream gender into the very fabric of daily political life in Scotland. The website, the ageing research, and the census classifications all provided interesting insights into the world of the Executive, but observing the ways civil servants attempted to fulfil the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty in their own place of work became the anchor for my PhD.

Thus, the other answer to why I stayed in Scotland is that I came to realise that studying the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty and other gender mainstreaming efforts in the Scottish Executive sheds light on the interplay between the things that as a feminist I am most interested in – the ways that the day-to-day lives of women (and men) interact with global processes and practices through organisational structures. I began to see how my interests in gender, work and organisations could be brought together with work being done on global gender equality policies like gender mainstreaming. There seemed to me to be a way to theorise benefits articulated by the gender mainstreaming literature by examining literature on gendered organisations. I could bring together key issues by looking at the local and the global levels of politics. In other words, I could study the powerful interplay between sub-national, national and international governments over gender issues, between local and global equality norms, and between people’s gendered everyday experiences working in government and their place in the international spectrum, as perceived by them and me.

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18507/mainstreamingequalities>

² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/08125028/0>

As I worked that first summer in the Scottish Executive, I watched civil servants who were also equalities experts (who were generally, although not exclusively, women) begin to deal with the ramifications of the fact that they had been successful in ensuring the passing of a legislative Duty which required public bodies to take on the onus of responsibility for ensuring gender equality (Cabinet Office, 2006). They celebrated this victory and were proud of the achievement; at the same time, they had to strategise ways to make the Duty a reality in their own place of work. Since I was conducting my pilot study and attempting to figure out a way to operationalise gender practices, norms, and experiences, I was attuned to the ways that gender played itself out for these experts on the individual level.

When the summer finished, I realised that although I had planned to study gender at the micro level, what I had actually found was an articulation of a much larger debate. In their own day-to-day experiences of implementing the Gender Equality Duty and attempting to go forward with a gender mainstreaming agenda, the equality experts I worked with were part of a larger movement in the international gender equality landscape of those trying to puzzle out how to devise and implement policies to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is touted as the next step in the gender equality movement and seen as the most “modern” form of gender governance, yet this belies the questions still raised by feminist commentators as to mainstreaming’s actual and practical usefulness to achieve material equality for women (see for example, Daly, 2005; Squires, 2007b) and the very real issues concerning the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. By observing and studying the experiences of this specific group of equality experts in Scotland as they implemented their mainstreaming policy, I could explore the tensions between movements in gender equality at the international level and the realities of being part of making those movements happen more locally.

I was hooked. I decided to continue my research at the Executive, and was welcomed to stay on in my role as the “website guru.” I worked for the Equalities research branch but was also allowed access to the policy branch and could thus form a more nuanced picture of how the civil service operates as a gendered organisation. I could also explore the day-to-day implementation of gender mainstreaming within the Executive. The work that I observed people doing forms the basis for the description in Chapter Four of the Scottish Executive as an organisation and the job of being a gender mainstreaming advocate. As I narrowed my research focus, I was also included in the more focused discussions, meetings, events, trainings and conferences surrounding the Gender Duty and gender mainstreaming. These

became the stories that I describe and analyze in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Being ‘a part of equalities’ in the Executive provided rich data for the thesis, which I analyse through the lens of institutional ethnography.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming came into focus as a new strategy worldwide during the 1990s, led by a commitment to it from the 1995 UN Beijing Platform for Action, which defined its main task as promoting gender mainstreaming. In 1996, the EUC Council of Ministers proposed the integration of gender equality into all EU policies. This was further entrenched in the Treaty of Amsterdam, where mainstreaming became the official policy approach to gender equality for the EU and all member states (Squires, 2007b; Rees, 2005). The World Bank adopted a gender and development mainstreaming strategy in 2001 and has documented the implementation of the strategy since that time³. A variety of international organisations, state level bureaucracies and local agencies have implemented gender mainstreaming as the preferred approach for working towards gender equity, and thus, particularly in EU member states, there has been an accommodation to this approach at the national, sub-national and local levels.

The policy known as gender mainstreaming has risen quickly to prominence, given that it was officially adopted just a little over a decade ago. In a relatively short time, mainstreaming has become the chosen policy associated with equality at all levels of government. However, this quick rise of acceptance belies the fragmented and contested nature inherent in the development, theory and goals behind gender mainstreaming. I examine this complex history at the international level in more depth in Chapter One where I argue that looking back to the adoption process at Beijing, we can see that even then, the concept of gender mainstreaming was contested in ways which continue to frame the debate about the potential and limits of mainstreaming as a change agenda.

³ See <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:20260262~menuPK:489120~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:336868,00.html> for further information.

Gender mainstreaming is designed to address the very ‘genderedness of organisations’ as Benschop and Verloo (2006) call it by focusing on transforming institutional structures which have gendered effects. As such, it is an approach to gender equality which has been adopted by policy officers, international organisations and feminist scholars. The following are definitions from various different sources – a policy document, an international institution, and a gender mainstreaming scholar:

Gender mainstreaming is “about reworking structures of decision-making and institutional cultures so that gender is dealt with centrally, sustainably and organically, as opposed to peripherally, sporadically and mechanically” (Chant and Gutmann, 2000)

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve *gender equality*” (ECOSOC).

“a strategy to re-invent the processes of policy design, implementation and evaluation by taking into account the gender-specific and often diverse interests and values of differently situated women and men” (True, 2003).

What I want to highlight from these definitions is that gender mainstreaming is *an approach* to gender equality. It’s not just a policy, a method, or a set of governing tools but rather a combination of all of these that aims to transform how politics, how governance, is done in organisations. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to take the onus off individuals to ensure that gender equality concerns are addressed and transfer it to organisations in a holistic way. Mainstreaming is predicated on the idea that if we can transform organisational standard operating procedures, policy processes, and cultural norms then we do not have to worry about if a person doing a particular job is a feminist or not. Instead gender sensitive analysis and practice is mainstreamed into the everyday life of organisations in such a way that it is included whether individuals personally subscribe to gender equality.

Importantly, gender mainstreaming is an equality approach which has been accepted globally and is now the principal feature of the international gender equality landscape. The UN, the EU, and the WTO, along with other international NGOs and aid organisations, have adopted gender mainstreaming as their main tactic to combat gender inequality. Yet, the important work to actually implement and ‘do’ gender mainstreaming occurs at local levels, by individuals who work in small units within these organisations. Thus, I will argue throughout this thesis, in order to better understand the global nature of gender mainstreaming, we must uncover and “be curious” (Enloe, 2004) about the local aspects of gender mainstreaming: How is it done? Who does it? What types of work go into making gender mainstreaming happen? What are the daily experiences of people who implement gender mainstreaming? These local aspects of gender mainstreaming are brought into focus through an investigation of the micro-level processes, practices and everyday work of gender mainstreaming.

Throughout my research, I have been concerned that I would not be able to articulate these connections between the global and local levels. However, I came to realise that any ‘leap’ I would have to make to bring together the politics of the everyday work being done in regards to gender mainstreaming in organisations and the international politics of global gender equality would not be as large as I first assumed. Individuals with whom I worked in the Scottish Executive were aware of the ways that their everyday work was intertwined with work being done internationally. And because the Executive and the Civil Service are bureaucracies, they share similar traits to other political organisations throughout the world which are attempting to implement gender mainstreaming. I build on ideas from the gender mainstreaming literature, gender work and organisation literature, and my methodological literature throughout the thesis to make these connections and move between levels of analysis.

Knowing intellectually that these levels of analysis are connected and wanting to understand further the processes of implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming, I needed a way to operationalise the connection between the global and local levels of politics, as well as to attend to micro and macro practices which are caught up in the work of gender mainstreaming. This is where my pilot study proved to be essential to my work. After using ethnography to attempt to “see” gender at work in the Scottish Executive, I realised that institutional ethnography could provide the link between my commitment to understanding women’s everyday lives and explicating the connections to the international level. After my pilot study, I also came to realise that I was working with a change agenda that was yet to be

effectively implemented. The people I worked with in the Executive were guardedly hopeful about the potential for gender mainstreaming – they still believed in its potential for transforming the policy process, but they had worked with it within the Executive long enough to know that change was slow. They were interested in me staying on to help them come up with ways to better ‘do’ mainstreaming – this was the problematic from which I started. In thinking about this, I began to wonder why gender mainstreaming was not working in the Executive, why did it need to be done better? What was hindering it from realizing its promised radical change?

My own interests in systems, organisations and the connections between multiple levels of politics led me to realise that while there were individuals committed to the transformational aspects of the gender mainstreaming agenda, and there was global support from the strategy, something was happening on the organisational level which was hindering the transformational aspects of gender mainstreaming. Thus, my research puzzle became focused on drawing together ideas surrounding change, mainstreaming, organisations and state bureaucracies and gender. I found institutional ethnography’s concept of relations of ruling, those socially and politically organized exercises of power which shape people’s actions and their lives (Campbell and Gregor, 2002) to be a useful idea to use in moving from everyday experience to wider realities. Thus, the analytic question framing the thesis became: *what happens to the radical potential of gender mainstreaming during its implementation and institutionalisation in governmental bureaucracies?* By connecting the local and the global, through an investigation at the organisational level, I could assess gender mainstreaming’s interaction with individuals, state bureaucracies, and the global equality policy landscape to better understand the plausibility of gender mainstreaming’s radical potential.

As I will argue throughout the thesis, the concept of gender and its ‘stickiness’ in organisations is vital to understanding why change agendas like gender mainstreaming get diluted in their actual implementation. I will highlight how Bureaucratic practices associated with the Civil Service, such as neutrality and objectivity, work against the perspective supported by gender mainstreaming which requires a focus on subjectivity and difference. I suggest that “fossilized norms” (Benschop & Verloo, 2006, p. 31) concerning the genderedness of organisations continue to pervade organisations and effectively hinder change. I also argue that there has been an under-theorisation in the literature about the embodied costs of being a change agent and the consequences of these costs on the gender mainstreaming agenda. I will develop the idea of “bifurcation” (Campbell, 2006; Smith,

1987) to explain the results of everyday banalities on progressive change-based agendas such as gender mainstreaming in state organisations. By bringing together insights gleaned from a gendered organisational perspective and institutional ethnography my thesis fills a gap in the gender mainstreaming literature. I argue that we can better understand the barriers to successful implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming and explain processes of institutional change and stability by taking seriously everyday experiences of organizational actors

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters, which explore the literature on gender mainstreaming, discuss the analytical and methodological framework, lay out the results from the institutional ethnography, and provide an analysis and conclusion. The first two chapters engage in a critical discussion of the main debates in gender mainstreaming. Chapter One, *Gendered Change in Governmental Organisations*, discusses literature on gender and organisations and feminist action within state bureaucracies. I use this discussion to contextualise gender mainstreaming as a policy framework that must operate within certain bureaucratic and organisational constraints that strive to undermine the radical change agenda that is associated with gender mainstreaming. I then use Rees' (1998, 2000, 2005) Model of Gender Equality - tinkering, tailoring, transforming – to review the literature on international gender equality policies. I problematise the idea of “gender” mainstreaming and suggest that feminists have a particular, radical view of gender mainstreaming that may not concur with its use in mainstream policy arenas. The feminist conception of gender mainstreaming, I argue, is riddled with challenges which result in a dilution of its radical promise.

In the next chapter, *Gender Mainstreaming in the UK and Scotland*, I again employ Rees' typology of tinkering, tailoring and transforming to outline the history of gender mainstreaming development in the UK and Scottish context. I pay special attention to the ways that developments in the UK and Scotland have been contextualized within the larger debates happening internationally. I highlight how mainstreaming in the UK has faced many of the same barriers as seen at the international level, yet it has also harnessed the energy of the UN and EU in specific ways to move forward with the mainstreaming agenda. In Scotland specifically, devolution has played a large role in the development of Scottish mainstreaming efforts. I trace the evolution of mainstreaming in Scotland and the Scottish

Executive, from its roots in the Equality Strategy at the “heart” of the Executive’s equality approach to its most recent reincarnation in the Gender Equality Duty, a legislative duty requiring proactive action by all public bodies to ensure gender equality. I lastly consider the changing landscape of gender equality in Scotland and address the intersectionality debate within equalities.

Institutional Ethnography and Gender Mainstreaming, Chapter Three, makes the case for using institutional ethnography in feminist political science and provides the methodological framework for the thesis. I suggest that Smith’s method of institutional ethnography is especially pertinent to the study of institutions, and I provide background on key tools and concepts that I adopted during the research. I introduce ideas of the problematic, relations of ruling, regulatory frames, and power and I suggest that Smith’s concept of work knowledges and text-work-text provide strong analytical tools to help us better understand the connections between everyday and more global levels of politics. Lastly, in this chapter I describe my own ethnographic process and project in the Scottish Executive.

Following the methodological discussion, the next chapter, *Work and Gender Mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive*, provides a detailed account of the work that I and others around me did during my ethnographic investigation of the Equalities Research Branch of the Scottish Executive. I present a fuller description of equalities work, especially that of gender mainstreaming, and discuss more specifically what people did in relation to equalities. I suggest that people implementing and institutionalising the gender mainstreaming agenda actually partake in multiple types of work, including the substantive work of equalities and mainstreaming, external relations work to train and educate others about their substantive work, administrative work required because they work for the Civil Service, caretaking work for the good of the Branch, Division or Unit, work done in relation to socialising, and the work of doing nothing. I argue that even those whose main job focus is mainstreaming do quite a bit of work not directly related to the substantive work of mainstreaming, and this reality is often left out of concepts regarding the implementation of the agenda. I show that organisational life is much more complex than mainstreaming theory takes into account.

The following two chapters are thematic chapters which present and investigate the findings of the institutional ethnography in the Scottish Executive. I organize the findings around the themes of actors (Chapter Five) and practices (Chapter Six). I present stories from my experience working in the Scottish Executive as examples of these themes and I work with

data from my observations to highlight key areas of interest. In *Actors, Strategies and Dilemmas in Gender Mainstreaming*, I examine the role of actors important to the gender mainstreaming process, the strategies these actors use to maintain their personal and professional legitimacy within the organisation, and the dilemmas which mainstreaming advocates face as they implement and institutionalise the policy. In *Practices in Bureaucracy*, I argue that the importance of practice to implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming cannot be ignored and focuses on specific Bureaucratic practices which continue to hinder the gender mainstreaming agenda. The thematic chapters represent the most focused section of the thesis, where I narrow my focus to my specific experience in the Executive and concentrate on examining these experiences using a gendered lens.

In Chapter Seven, *What Happens to the Radical Potential of Gender Mainstreaming?*, I widen my focus again to bring together the description and the themes and reflect on the continued puzzles and challenges of gender mainstreaming. I suggest that paradoxes exist in the implementation and institutionalisation of the agenda which reduce its radical potential. I draw on analytical concepts from institutional ethnography to explain how the experiences from previous chapters are coordinated into larger webs of relations. I discuss the ways that regulatory frames, fossilised norms, and the process of bifurcation act as coordinating mechanisms on the institutional level, translating everyday experiences of enacting change into processes and practices which the organisation can accommodate. I argue that change agendas, like gender mainstreaming, which exert both endogenous and exogenous pressures on organisations fail to fulfil their radical potential because they are bounded by the limits of working from within organisations.

Finally, my *Conclusion: Convergences, Contributions and Continuances* summarises the thesis and places the findings in a wider context. I explicate my contributions to the literature, and advocate a deeper understanding of gender mainstreaming by paying close attention to the everyday lives and experiences of women and men since they are both impacted by, and have impact on, global systems. I suggest that there is more convergence than variance of the institutional barriers that hinder change in ruling institutional ideas, practices and processes concerning gender and gender mainstreaming and I argue that the recent turn in the literature towards a critical perspective on gender mainstreaming as the ‘answer’ to problems of gendered change in organisations is welcome and needed as we continue to fight for women’s equality. Lastly, I offer some feminist advice for doing gender mainstreaming and suggest areas of further research and study.

Gendered Change in Governmental Organisations

State and public organisations are central mechanisms of governance, important as structures of order, and essential for the day-to-day practicalities of making and enacting policy. Thus, bureaucracies and state institutions have long been a site of feminist engagement with the state (Ferguson, 1987; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989, Eisenstein, 1991; Ressler, 1987, Watson 1990). Agitation for change occurs at the local level⁴, at the sub-national level, at the national level⁵, and at the international level. Despite this variety of organisations, common challenges and successes connect the experiences of those working towards gendered change in governmental organisations. Gender mainstreaming, as a specific type of gendered change agenda, represents the latest historical step in feminist engagement with political organisations. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to promote gender equality in institutions, particularly political bureaucracies. It aims to eliminate gender bias in organisations, thus helping to ensure equality for those within the organisation and for those impacted by the organisation. The aim of reforming the policy making process is to produce more gender sensitive processes and, thus, more gender equitable outcomes. It is a change agenda specifically designed to interact with bureaucratic norms, processes, policies and other institutional forms of genderedness. Yet, it continues to not live up to its potential to radically transform governmental and political organisations, and thus policy processes and outcomes.

In order to answer the essential question of the thesis – why has gender mainstreaming not succeeded in radically changing governmental organisations – it is important to lay out the context of current gender mainstreaming approaches and examine key debates in the mainstreaming literature. As I will argue throughout this chapter, the answer to the question regarding the lack of success of gender mainstreaming cannot be understood without also examining literature on gender, work and organisation. The success and limits of implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming can be better understood if gender mainstreaming is seen within the context of literature on gendered organisations. I suggest

⁴ See for UK examples, Breitenbach, Brown, Mackay and Webb, 2002.

⁵ The sub-national and national levels will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

that the literature on gendered organisations, specifically that which focuses on bureaucracies, including governmental organisations, provides important insights which can be applied to understanding the implementation and institutionalisation of the gender mainstreaming agenda.

I introduce gender mainstreaming in the context of a discussion on gendered organisations. I discuss the similarities between the experiences of those implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming and the experiences of earlier cohorts of state feminists working in bureaucracies. I then highlight the ways that lessons learned in state bureaucracies provide insights and can be applied to the case of gender mainstreaming. I examine the ways feminists and those interested in gendered change have attempted to engage with state bureaucracies. Through an investigation of the femocrat strategy, I outline the critiques feminists raise about working within bureaucracies at the state level and examine their experiences. I argue that the gender mainstreaming agenda is a feminist policy approach that has consciously been attempted within bureaucratic organisations. As a result, being aware of the types of issues which femocrats faced in their engagements with bureaucracies alerts us to the constraints gender mainstreaming will face.

This chapter also traces the development of gender mainstreaming as the preferred policy approach of local, state and international governmental organisations to promote gender equality. The goals of gender mainstreaming are to expose, tackle and remove institutionalised gender bias in the structures and operation of government, so I focus on the policy making process. The gender mainstreaming approach is based on the idea that more gender sensitive governmental organisations and processes will lead to more gender equal outcomes in relation to policy and legislation. In this chapter, I argue that the gender equality landscape at the international level has continued to evolve since the passing of the UN Charter in 1945 where the preamble enshrines the world's "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of Nations large and small." Today, those working for the equalities agenda have a broader definition of gender and a deeper appreciation for the intersections of multiple forms of oppression and ever-diversifying approaches to attempt to achieve gender equality. The field has grown tremendously, although success has come in fits and starts.

To explore the history and development of feminist engagement with the state, I make use of Rees' (1998, 2000, 2005) demarcation between tinkering, tailoring and transforming. This allows me to move through an historical review of literature pertinent to gender mainstreaming and explore why feminists were so excited about the radical potential of gender mainstreaming. I highlight the reasons why feminist change agents carried high hopes for gender mainstreaming as a strategy which could transcend previous structural limits to change.

Throughout the chapter, I argue that there are challenges inherent to gender mainstreaming that limit its radical and transformational potential. The strategy of gender mainstreaming attempts to produce gender equality outcomes of a new and different nature, but it is constrained because it is being implemented in bureaucratic organisations. This chapter develops the context for my overall argument that feminist advocates of gender mainstreaming underplayed the pervasive 'stickyness' of gender and the consequences of everyday gendered practices and norms in organisational life. Throughout the chapter, I raise questions and seek to question assumptions about currently taken-for-granted concepts at play in the field of gendered organisations and gender mainstreaming. I also articulate previously unexplored connections between the two fields.

Gender and Organisations

Gender in Bureaucracies

The study of gendered organisations looks at organisations and workplaces from a gendered, feminist perspective. Those active in this field look at women and gender in the workplace from an organisational perspective and draw upon sociological and management theory to make many of their claims. The field encompasses a wide variety of topics including gender discrimination in the workplace, barriers to the equal opportunities in organisations, the diverse ways organizations carry gender meanings, and how men and women interact with those meanings (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). Generally, there are two approaches to understanding the connections between gender and organisations. The first approach is to explore 'gender-in-organisations.' This approach focuses on what happens to men and women in workplaces. The second approach, which is the approach I adopt and will explore

throughout this section, is that of ‘gendered organisations.’ Examining gendered organisations entails seeing organisations as manifestations of gendered meanings, where structures, processes, practices and policies are ascribed masculine and feminine values (Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Ely and Padavic, 2007). Generally, although not always, the masculine is privileged over the feminine in gendered organisations. This privilege makes organisations and workplaces ripe for feminist investigation. This section starts with a brief overview of the field of gendered organisations and the development of scholarship from ‘gender-in-organisations’ to ‘gendered organisations.’ I use this overview to contextualise a more specific discussion of gender and bureaucracies later in the section.

Early work on gender in organisations focuses on individuals and their specific tactics to hinder women’s opportunities. Even in organisations that made formal commitments to equal opportunity, there was room to study “how individual men and man-led organizations might be interpreting, implementing, fostering or impeding, the equal opportunities strategies backed by women” (Cockburn, 1991, p. 2). Cockburn’s study provides an insightful view of the interplay between those working under equal opportunities regimes and the institutional barriers which they face, using the notion of patriarchy as her theoretical framework. She argues that most institutions have two agendas: a short agenda, which most often represents the minimum equality standards needed to be in accordance with law, and the long agenda, which involves substantial change with the aim of equality and parity (p. 216). Her findings demonstrate how generally men at both the top and in the rank-and-file push for the short agenda with the patriarchal hope of extinguishing the long agenda. Women, as the majority of equality officers and due in part to their struggle to maintain positions of power, work for the long agenda. Power is inherent in this fight because change in organisations must always be seen as bounded by the fact that “organizations are the embodiment of different forms of patriarchal power relations” (Savage and Witz, 1992, p. 57) which constantly set the parameters for change.

Studying the embodiment of gender and how gender plays out in the organisational context is a crucial focus for those who examine gender in organisations. A better understanding of the consequences of embodied and gendered practices provides key insights into understanding why organisations are masculinist and the process by which they become masculinised. Halford, Savage and Witz (1997) argue that the embodied nature of organisations validates not only a masculine body, but “the independent, lone individual with no other commitment”

(p. 264-5), a particular type of masculine body. In a similar argument made about hegemonic masculinities which privilege certain types of masculinity over others, Witz (1998) suggests “the ways in which gender is embedded within ways of organizing is by recourse to particular constructions and discourses to male and female modes of embodiment” (p. 57). This idea of embodiment “evokes the ‘lived body’ and registers the salience of ‘body matters’ insofar as these are the condition and constituent of social action” (Witz, 1998, p. 56). Gendered norms become embodied through the ways women and men represent femininity and masculinity in their everyday working lives. For example, women may feel bounded and constrained in their workplaces, limiting the exposure of non-work related identities in their organisational space to fit in accordance with what it means to be a ‘normal, heterosexual’ woman (Tyler and Cohen, 2010). Women often must work against a gendered ideal worker norm (Williams, 2000) that forces them to continue working in traditional ways so that they do not face career penalties, while involved fathers continue to struggle with norms that do not take into account their commitment to parenting roles (Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, and Moen, 2010). These examples highlight a gender-in-organisation approach, which focuses on the bodily experiences of men and women in organisations.

In work that uses a gendered organisation approach, the focus is on examining ways that organisations are and become gendered. This widens the focus of research to include examinations of organisational practices, culture, and processes. The classic way to approach this type of research goes beyond simply looking at women and men and their place in organisations to make the claim that organisations are not gender neutral. Rather they have been gender blind. Organisations are themselves “gendered processes in which both gender and sexuality have been obscured through a gender-neutral, asexual discourse, and suggest some of the ways that gender, the body, and sexuality are part of the processes of control in work organizations” (Acker, 1990, p. 140). In fact, procedures and processes which seem natural to organisations often carry intensely gendered significances. For example, the path to organisational leadership has traditionally been based on access, autonomous action, and an orientation towards result-related outcomes (Billing and Alvesson, 2002). This concept of leadership carries masculine overtones and leads to an environment that is hostile towards leadership styles that carry with them a more feminine orientation.

Thus, to understand organisations and women and men’s roles within those organisations, we must move away from ‘gender in organisations’ to examine them as gendered organisations.

The argument for this movement is that while women's bodies are still important to consider, there is a larger context which contains gendered processes, norms, and ideals in which bodies must perform and act. It is not enough to simply add women as part of the analysis of organisations; we must also consider the ways organisations are themselves gendered. This can provide key insights in to the ways that "organizations like other social institutions are 'artificially' shaped in specific ways" (Alvesson and Billing, 2009, p. 5) that carry gendered significance.

Understanding that organisations themselves are gendered is a key concept when thinking about feminist activism within the state as it allows for a broader arena in which feminists can act⁶. State organisations – bureaucracies – are central to the functioning of the state and thus a starting point for feminists engaged in changing organisational arrangements which continue to marginalize women's interests (Connell, 2006a; Eisenstein, 1985, 1991, 1996; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989). Bureaucracies are key entities in the study of gendered change in public and political organisations. They play an important role in institutionalising gender norms (Connell, 2006b) and serve as conduits of men's power (Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989). Bureaucracies prescribe complex, yet well-defined, guidelines about the role of men and women and masculinity and femininity which can be addressed by feminist activists (Chappell, 2002). Bureaucracy is the space in the state where individuals interact daily with individual, institutional and social structures. For feminists, it can be a locale of potential - the space to agitate for gendered change - as well as a constraint on feminist activism.

Bureaucracies in the Weberian sense are an institutionalised form of authority which rely on rationality, impersonality, standardisation and hierarchy in order to "arrange individuals and tasks so as to secure continuity and stability and to remove ambiguity in relations among participants" (Ferguson, 1987, p. 7). State bureaucracies are thus the structures which maintain and allow governance to occur. Yet they are also a process (Ferguson, 1987; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989). They constantly seek to uphold their own place through the replication and solidification of the machinery of the organisation. Examples of these

⁶ In thinking about the state, I agree with Chappell (2002), Eisenstein (1996) and Franzway, Court and Connell (1989) who argue that the state is a multifaceted conglomeration of individual institutions which bear culturally masculine traditions. This moves beyond seeing the state as a monolithic structure which operates only to subsume women's interests (Ferguson, 1987; MacKinnon, 1989), thus allowing for agency by actors, including feminists.

processes include standardised rules, detailed record-keeping and pro forma communication (Ferguson, 1987). In this way, bureaucracies maintain control of practices, processes, rules, norms and discourses. But they not only develop their own versions of these, they also interpret and act out larger social norms.

In politics, bureaucracies are the places where politics happen. It is in state bureaucracies where legislation is put into practice, where policy becomes the output of those working in the organisation. Thus, individuals and their everyday work practices in bureaucracies have a direct impact on policy and politics. The converse is also true – bureaucratic practices have a direct impact on individuals' ability to implement and institutionalise policy and politics. With this perspective, it becomes possible to see the place of agents within the bureaucratic structure and to reason why feminists have engaged with state organisations as part of their change agenda. In order to do so feminists have pointed to the ways that bureaucracies, as traditionally conceived, are gendered in specific ways to promote and uphold hegemonic forms of masculinity.

Feminist Engagement with Bureaucracies

Due to the recognition by feminists of the power of bureaucracies in political life, bureaucracies have been the site for feminist agitation through a variety of avenues. Theoretically, feminist commentators have added a gendered perspective to ideas and norms which were considered un-gendered. From an activist perspective, methods like quotas and women's policy agencies have attempted to ensure the inclusion of a feminist and gendered perspective in politics. In this section, I explore ways that feminists have brought a gendered lens to bureaucratic assumptions. I focus specifically on the femocrat strategy as an example of feminist agitation in government bureaucracies. I argue that examining previous attempts to enact gendered change in bureaucracies reveals possible barriers that the gender mainstreaming agenda will face as it works within similar bureaucratic environments.

In finding the ways that “organizations themselves [work] as the bearers of gender relations” (Connell, 2006b, p. 436), it helps to consider the un-questioned assumptions upon which an organisation is built. In Western state bureaucracies, evidence points to strong commitments to norms which are treated as non-gendered, but which in fact have strong normative and gendered implications (Connell, 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Chappell, 2006; Stivers, 1993;

O’Conner, 1996). There has been a strong focus on the norm of bureaucratic ‘neutrality’ and the ways it is used to uphold masculine ideas within bureaucracies (Chappell, 2002, 2006; Stivers, 1993). Stivers (1993) finds bureaucratic values such as objective expertise, autonomy, and professionalism deeply gendered. Her argument is that the traditional conception of a public administrator or civil servant is one which “privileges masculine characteristics while denigrating and/or suppressing feminine ones” (p. 52). It is possible for women to manage these characteristics; however, “they have virtually never done it without constant effort to manage their femaleness on the job and without continuing to balance work and home responsibilities” (p. 54) in ways which simply do not concern men. Other gendered norms, including ideals of impartiality, objectivity, neutrality, merit and career generalism also operate powerfully as masculine, whilst ‘othering’ feminine traits such as subjectivity and passion (Chappell, 2006; Burton, 1991) are often de-valued.. The unquestioned acceptance of those norms as non-gendered suggests a worldview which ignores differing experiences and subjectivities.

The recognition that many of the core values which people uphold in bureaucracies are gendered in a particular way sheds light on ways that power is gendered as well (Connell, 1987; Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995). Bureaucratic norms and values play an important role in structuring patterns of interaction. They have specific and gendered consequences for the people who work in the organisation and the work that gets done by those people. In short, there is a gendered pattern of power where a masculine approach is upheld and plays itself out in the everyday life of state organisations (Connell, 2006b; Gierycz, 1999; Guy, 1992). Connell’s (2006b) work on the public sector in New South Wales suggests persistent and new gender divisions of labour, a devaluing of an explicitly gendered outlook in favour of gender neutrality, and a spill over of gender problems from outside agency walls into the business of the organisation. For example, whilst researchers observed a pattern of gender segregation in those who do data entry and routine keyboard work, young women in both professional and administrative jobs did not express a sense of gender inequality (p. 442, 446). The subtext of these results highlights the enduring power of masculinity in the organisational context. Masculinity plays a significant role in deciding how men interact with each other and with women. It also impacts how women act with one another. Men matter, fundamentally, because they still hold positions of power (for specific examples see Livesey, Taylor and Jones, 2007; Office of National Statistics, 2007a). However, it is not just the number of men who hold more senior positions in bureaucracies that matters. What also matters is the sense of masculinity that then pervades the organisation due to the number of men in top positions.

Masculinist bureaucracies occur not only because of the numbers of men who work in them, but also because cultural ideals of masculinity are embedded within everyday practices, norms and processes.

The recognition that masculine power is still the prevailing type of power in state bureaucracies (Stivers, 1993) that deal with gender mainstreaming reveals one of the core challenges for gender mainstreaming. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that bureaucracies are still manifestations of a particular type of masculinity that works forcefully against the efforts to consciously gender these organisations in a more equal way for women. The status quo of masculine power does not go uncontested at any organisation (Connell, 2006a). Thus a complex and dynamic relationship grows between the dominant, powerful system and feminists and equality experts who work for a different way of organising the system. As feminists argue for a new way of dealing with gender equality, they advocate the feminist and radical intentions of gender mainstreaming (Rees, 2000, Squires, 2007b, True and Mintrom, 2001). However, even when the concept of gender mainstreaming is embraced by those in power, many of the radical claims are stripped away. Powerfully masculine norms are so embedded in bureaucracies that structural change can only work in fits and starts to erode bastions of masculine power. The successful implementation and institutionalisation of a gender mainstreaming approach relies on individuals committed to living with the personal costs that come from being both a bureaucrat and a gender advocate, as well as strong organisational commitments to formal changes which are backed up with assessment, legal measures and high placed support. Without the right combination of factors, agents are indeed bound by institutional factors intent on maintaining the status quo.

A key insight into the ways feminists have engaged with state organisations is provided by the literature on femocrats, which elucidates how feminist women inside women's policy agencies in various Western state bureaucracies have agitated successfully to address specific women's policy concerns (Chappell 2002, 2006; Eisenstein, 1996; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989; Sawer, 1990). Women's policy agencies (WPAs) or machineries (WPMs) are a form of group representation and involve institutional mechanisms within state bureaucracies devoted to women's policy issues (Stetson and Mazuer, 1995). The emergence of WPAs in the 1970s and 1980s was an effort to focus attention on the under-representation of women and women's issues in state bureaucracies (Squires, 2007b). They provided points

of entry to governmental organisations for feminist agitators.⁷ This ‘state feminism’ approach specifically acknowledges the work of women who work within the WPAs, and these women became known as femocrats. The femocrat strategy, which was pioneered in Australia in the 1970s, involved “the entry of feminists into all areas of the bureaucracy in an effort to influence public policy making through a feminist perspective” (Chappell, 2002, p. 85). Supported by the Australian Labour Party, feminists were hired in powerful positions with the express intent of bringing a gender perspective to the policy process. Australian femocrats faced a number of problems. They were subjected to criticism and critique in terms of autonomy – being tied to specific party goals – and entrenchment – finding and keeping access to power (Chappell, 2002). Feminist activists outside the state also questioned their ability to stay ‘true’ to the cause and not become co-opted by the institutionalisation mechanisms of the bureaucracy (Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989). In contrast, Canadian femocrats had more success in legal institutions than in legislative ones, suggesting that there is a variance in the openness of organisations to change strategies (Chappell, 2002). In many contexts, “femocrats constitute a challenge to the state’s interest in the gender order and to the masculine dominance of the public sphere” (Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989, p. 154) and have been important actors who intervene positively for structural change. In today’s equality landscape of gender mainstreaming, gender experts and advocates also provide essential interventions into the masculinist world of bureaucracies. They provide training on concepts of gender, ensure that gender statistics continue to be published, and advocate for the gender mainstreaming agenda (Squires, 2005b; Stratigaki, 2005; Walby, 2005). In addition, external motivators in the shape of feminist civil society groups have continued to pressure state organisations to highlight gender equality as a continued pressing concern.

There is a potential place for engagement in state organisations, as evidenced by the femocrat strategy and the continued presence of gender equality experts in international organisations. In addition, we have seen an expansion of the discursive space around gender and women’s interests (Watson, 1990, 1992) and shifts in masculinity. These all point to ways that gendered change is possible. However, many critics caution that the extent of gendered change is limited, especially when looking at feminist change, which advocates for women and their interests specifically and for the displacement or disruption of masculinist norms.

⁷ Women’s policy agencies have received mixed reviews by feminist commentators. Some favour them as a strong mode of group representation; others argue that they essentialise what is really a highly-fragmented women’s movement (see Squires, 2007b for an in-depth discussion). I am interested in WPAs here as an example of feminist engagement with the state. I enter into a more specific discussion of WPAs in Chapter Two.

Bureaucracies are designed to uphold the status quo and are thus resistant to change. For feminist politics, this resistance plays itself out on multiple levels including the personal, the interpersonal and the institutional. The personal level is where these tensions are embodied. Femocrats and gender equality advocates enact this resistance personally every day as they struggle to maintain a balance between being bureaucrats and feminist change agents (Chappell, 2002, p. 106; Benschop and Verloo, 2006, p. 31). On the interpersonal level, Connell (2006b) found both active and passive resistance towards gender change. Socially constructed gender relations that people bring with them into the organisation are hard to overcome. Finally, we can see that gender is 'sticky' in organisations. Institutionally, there are competing factors which both uphold and shut down change agendas. Norms which are part of the environment of bureaucracies provide strong reference points for action (or inaction). Chappell (2006) argues that a certain logic of appropriateness "constrains certain types of behaviour while encouraging others" (p. 225). Bureaucracies provide frameworks for which rules already exist for their workers, making it easy and convenient to maintain the status quo.

Insights from the femocrat literature highlight masculine power in organisations and the powerful gendered concepts which pervade bureaucracies. They also point to a feminist response towards bureaucracies which attempts to change the status quo. These insights guide us in thinking about the ways that the gender mainstreaming agenda attempts to negotiate similar bureaucratic environments and raises questions which will be examined in the following chapters. For example, will gender mainstreaming fail because it focuses on changing processes and policies which the bureaucratic status quo regards as un-gendered? The literature on state bureaucracies indicates that this is expected since the prevailing norms in bureaucracies are so difficult to change. Pervading bureaucratic norms are often underplayed in the literature on gender mainstreaming and their consequences are not seen.

The femocrat case also highlights the importance of key actors in guided gender change agendas (Chappell, 2000), an area which is also articulated in the gender mainstreaming process. The femocrat strategy highlights the importance of well-placed feminist agitators to the success of agendas focused on more gender equal policy outcomes. The gender mainstreaming policy has followed this model, seeking to place gender equality experts in organisations attempting to implement and institutionalise mainstreaming. Yet, many of the lessons learned from the femocrats about the personal and embodied importance of these

feminists have not carried over to gender mainstreaming. For example, little attention has been paid to the question of the significance of feminist actors in the success of the radical aspects of gender mainstreaming. Paying close attention to the lessons learned from previous feminist engagements with bureaucratic governmental organisations can provide insights in to the possible barriers for the gender mainstreaming agenda.

Understanding feminist engagement within the state sheds light on potential spaces of change in bureaucracies which are opened up and closed down due to institutional factors. It becomes clear that gender mainstreaming is a feminist agenda rooted in the belief that political organisations should be the site for gender change. It is bounded in specific ways due to the masculine nature, overriding norms, and unquestioned assumptions of state and governmental bureaucracies. As I explore later in the thesis, the tensions lived by femocrats and seen in earlier engagements of feminists with the state alert us to the kinds of issues – personal, interpersonal and institutional – which may constrain gender mainstreaming, because gender mainstreaming works within bureaucracies.

It is surprising how little research exists on the everyday experiences of gender advocates who do the work of promoting change⁸. What little literature is available suggests contradictory pressures and paradoxical outcomes of engagements with political organisations. There is a paradox which occurs when a strategy is aimed at bureaucracies and public organisations specifically to get them to change practices and policy matters. By needing to work within and deploy the structures of the organisation, feminists are inherently bound by the very same structures they seek to challenge. This paradox begins to shed better light on some of the reasons gender mainstreaming has failed in its radical potential to transform political organisations. As bureaucracies, those political organisations limit radical change through everyday practices and norms which get transmitted through the bureaucracy.

Gender Mainstreaming

The Council of Europe defines gender mainstreaming as “the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is

⁸ See Chappell, 2006; Eisenstein, 1992; and Wright, 2002 for hints into the experiences of women dealing with gender equality in various countries.

incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making” (http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Equality/02_Gender_mainstreaming/). Generally, gender mainstreaming is a term “that appears to travel well” (Daly, 2005, p. 434) but there has been great debate, both in academic and policy circles, of what is actually being referred to by the term. As suggested in the following quote, the concept has a long history of being questioned by feminist commentators. “Activists, lobbyists and gender policy advocates working within institutions” they wrote, “have adopted a variety of strategies to influence institutional agendas and bring about ‘mainstreaming’, often resorting to instrumental arguments to convince hardened bureaucrats of the need to address gender issues (Baden and Goetz, 1997, p. 9).

The literature on gender mainstreaming is vocal and explicit about the fact that application of the term is contested, slippery, and can mean anything and everything from a policy to a process to a goal. Yet, even with this acknowledgement, ten years after Baden and Goetz’s article, few authors stop and consider the meanings inherent in the term itself. The term is treated as a given, disregarding the political and normative tensions that exist right below the surface of the term. While the Council of Europe definition is the one most commonly used in Europe, organisations have developed their own unique definitions and academics tend to define it depending on what aspect they are studying. There is a consensus that the term and its definition is fundamentally unclear (Squires, 2005b; Daly, 2005; Lombardo and Meier, 2006) which leads to an uneven application by policy-makers. Thus, while we can gain a better understanding of gender mainstreaming by examining it in the context of bureaucracies, uncovering some of the basic assumptions of gender mainstreaming also helps provide a clearer picture of why gender mainstreaming has not fulfilled its radical potential. The history of gender mainstreaming leads to a patchy and uneven application of terms and understandings. Internal debates within the field lead to asymmetric implementation and institutionalisation. This is not always bad, but it limits the radical potential of the agenda.

The confusion lies in the fact that gender mainstreaming, and equalities mainstreaming more broadly, can be considered a process, a policy, a set of tools, and/or a group of transformative goals depending on the context in which it is used and who is promoting it. Lombardo and Meier (2006) further argue that tensions occur in mainstreaming because of the consistent and continued “patriarchal opposition to feminist goals implied in the strategy” (p. 151). Thus, mainstreaming’s success is based on the interpretation of it as a policy, strategy, or toolkit and

whether or not this interpretation is based in a feminist outlook. These various theories all look at the tensions from different angles, but all point to the inconsistencies and tensions that have arisen as mainstreaming has been implemented and institutionalised into policy life. In addition, those responsible for implementing and institutionalising the agenda in specific organisations have developed their own understandings of the concept, adding to the confusion and inconsistency in definition.

The ‘Gender’ in Gender Mainstreaming

One of the key areas where debates occur in gender mainstreaming is in the understandings of ‘gender’ and its role in the policy agenda. The current feminist literature on gender mainstreaming reflects the recent trend in feminist theory toward seeing gender as a process, an act which both women and men carry out throughout their lives. It is also a process that is bounded by the institutional frameworks in which they live (and thus practice gender). This understanding of the fact that structural processes must change if gender equality is to be achieved underpins a feminist articulation of gender mainstreaming. Equal treatment and/or positive action demands attempt to alleviate the results of structural inequality but do not question the norms upon which the structure is built. Mainstreaming attempts to “rework the norms in a manner more sensitive to the diverse realities of gendered practices” (Squires, 2007b, p. 136). This focus on gender, rather than women, is one reason mainstreaming has been embraced as the most modern and perhaps most effective way of making policy to alleviate gender inequity. However, as this section shows, the term ‘gender’ is not uniformly understood in the same way by all feminists and these debates are reflected throughout the gender mainstreaming literature.

“Gender has become the central analytic concept in women’s studies” (Hawkesworth, 1997, p. 650) since it helps theorists challenge notions of “the natural attitude” (p. 653) towards women. However, it too has a multiplicity of definitions, understandings, and conceptualizations arising from out its history. Today, generally, the term gender refers to “a complex and contested concept that can best be understood as a category that was developed to explore what counts as ‘woman’ and as ‘man’ (Squires, 1999). It relates to the meanings, relationships, and arrangements we develop that in many ways govern how we interact with one another. It is “a matter of the social relations within which individuals and groups act” (Connell, 2002; p. 9). Other feminists use the metaphor of ‘gender-as-a-lens’ through which

we can examine politics or other disciplines in ways that take women seriously. Thus, gender refers “not to women or to men per se, but to the ideological and material relation between them... additionally, gender is not given biologically, as a result of the sexual characteristics of either women or me, but is constructed socially” (Whitworth, 1997, p. 25). Many concepts of gender take into account sexual difference but are more interested in breaking down essentialised versions of “femininity” and “masculinity.” In this way of understanding gender, many feminists move theorizing beyond seeing women and men as dichotomous, sexed beings and emphasise the importance of relationships and practices which constitute humans as gendered beings.

If gender is more than sex, then it is implicit in the constitution and co-constitution of our social relationships, norms, institutions and practices. It is one of the fundamental systems from, by, and through which we make meanings out of our lived experiences. I work from the premise that gender is more than simply sex and that it governs practically all of the ways in which we relate with each other. Thus, the question then becomes how does gender work in society? And specifically, how does gender work in organisations? One answer to these questions is articulated by those who theorize gender as a practice, as something we ‘do’ (Butler, 2004; Connell, 1987, 2002; Martin, 2001, 2004; West and Zimmerman, 1987). This work continues to push the boundaries for reconceptualising gender as relational, fluid and dynamic.

In their influential article, West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that “gender itself is constituted through interaction” (p. 129). Individuals do gender as “an ongoing activity embedded in everyday interaction” (p. 130). They firmly place the process of gender creation in the everyday lived experiences of both men and women and pave the way for future theorizing on how this is done. In addition, they maintain that sex is the biological determination of a person based on genitalia or chromosomes (with the recognition that the determination and the criteria which caused it may not match). A sex category is the membership of a person in the category that is socially accepted as “woman” or “man.” Again, there is the recognition that a person may be member of a particular sex category without the appropriate sex criteria. Finally, gender is “the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category” (p. 127). In other words, there is something about gender which takes into account how individuals act in regards to socially acceptable ideas ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine.’ West

and Zimmerman also highlight the importance of institutions in rendering gender legitimate, continuous, and a product of the individual (rightly or wrongly). Thus “if we fail to do gender appropriately, we as individuals – not the institutional arrangements – may be called to account” (p. 146). Their discussion of doing gender and the institutional structures which enable individuals to do gender provides one of the fundamental arguments for the theorization of gender as practice.

Judith Butler has elaborated upon this idea of individuals doing gender in her theory of gender as a performance. One of Butler’s main tenets is that “gender is a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed” (Butler, 2004, p. 1) and that this doing is something in which we all engage in both a knowing and unknowing way. She argues that “through the practice of gender performativity, we not only see how the norms that govern reality are cited but grasp one of the mechanisms by which reality is reproduced *and* altered” (p. 218, italics in original). Our practices of gender both react to, and help create, the social systems in which we live. These social systems are often oppressive to women. In this postmodern view, gender becomes a set of signifying practices which construct a fictive subject; this subject can then be deconstructed and seen in multifaceted and complex ways. One of the responses to this is a shift toward thinking beyond gender as a symbolic construction based on binaries. Instead it becomes “important not only to understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established as pre-suppositional but to trace the moments where the binary system of gender is disputed and challenged, where the coherence of the categories is put into question, and where the very social life of gender turns out to be malleable and transformable” (p. 216). Butler’s view of gender forces us to rethink our very notions of what is gender.

These debates within feminist circles have had an impact on the gender equality policy landscape. Many feminist policy advocates have rejected a completely postmodern view, arguing that the complete deconstruction of the idea of gender can lead to the de-mobilization of the category ‘woman’ which is needed for political aims⁹ (Bacchi, 1996; Benhabib, 1995). They argue that keeping a more material focus allows feminist activism to focus on issues which disproportionately impact women. However, the work done to question what we mean

⁹ Although Butler (2004) rejects the view that the deconstruction project is apolitical, instead arguing for “the thinking of the possible” (p. 219) as a normative project with a fundamentally political message.

by 'gender' permeates the work being done on gender mainstreaming (see especially, Bacchi and Eveline 2003, 2005; Kasic, 2004). One of the main debates that Baden and Goetz (1997) discuss and which continues to be reflected in discussions of gender mainstreaming today is the use and applicability of the word 'gender'. In Beijing and later, on the one side, were those who argued that when 'gender' is taken up by institutional forces, it is done so in a reductionist way that simply refers to men and women. This leads to "stripping away consideration of the relational aspects of gender, of power and ideology and of how patterns of subordination are reproduced" (Baden and Goetz, 1997, p. 7). Baden and Goetz argue that the word gender can become so de-politicized that some feminist activists and academics want to turn away from the word altogether. On the other side of the argument are those who feel that using the term 'gender' is a strategic move, making a specifically feminist agenda more palpable to masculinised power structures. Drawing on lessons from the femocrats who found that being explicit about their feminism drew fire from both patriarchal members of organisations and from feminist colleagues outside the state who questioned their commitment to the cause, using the term 'gender' allows for more political flexibility by gender and equality advocates within organisations. In reflecting on the ways gender and mainstreaming were discursively contested during the Beijing conference (Baden and Goetz, 1997; Morgan, 1996) and continue to be debated in the literature, it is apparent that tensions about definitions continue to underlie the gender mainstreaming agenda. I return to the politics of language throughout the thesis as I argue that the debates about definitions continue to undermine the radical potential of the mainstreaming agenda.

These debates and discussions have helped feminists interested in policy be more explicit about the structural, power-related, and relational aspects that frame and explain women's persistent inequality. The analytical debates about gender provide the context in which gender mainstreaming is done and experienced by gender equality advocates. The debates about gender which permeate the gender mainstreaming agenda provide insight into the problems that advocates have had in implementing it within organisations, hinting at spaces and limits of change. Theoretical debates about gender, the category women and equality have not been limited to discussions on gender mainstreaming. The next section traces the evolution of some of these debates within the global equality policy literature.

Tinkering, Tailoring, and Transforming

Gender mainstreaming is not the first equality policy to face the challenge of accommodating various perspectives on gender, equality and women. Thus, it is important to see this ‘new’ agenda within the context of the larger gender equality landscape. Although mainstreaming is currently promoted by the UN, the World Bank, and the EU, along with a majority of countries throughout the world, it is an approach towards improving gender equality which can be viewed as part of the evolving history of equal opportunity politics and practice. Gender mainstreaming is the result of the struggle by feminists to promote equality between men and women and has come about due to feminist organising around political institutions and organisations.

While using heuristic devices to separate and divide the feminist movement is problematic because it can bury the nuanced interplay between times (Daly, 2005), they do provide analytic merit, allowing me to categorise and group together the literature. Rees’ (1998, 2000, 2005) system, developed with respect to developments in the EU, organises three approaches to gender equality at the international level that I will use throughout the thesis (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.1 Models of Gender Equality (Rees, 2005)

Equal Treatment – ‘tinkering’

- Focuses on individual rights
- Legal remedies

Positive Action – ‘tailoring’

- Focuses on group disadvantage
- ‘Special’ projects and measures

Mainstreaming – ‘transforming’

- Focuses on systems and structures that give rise to group disadvantage
- Integrates gender equality into mainstream systems and structures

Equal treatment ‘tinkering’ looks to provide equal access through legislation and requires the individual to use her formal rights. Positive action ‘tailoring’ recognizes that gender

inequality means men and women come from different starting points on the equality spectrum, and looks to encourage equal outcomes by making up for the unequal starting points. Mainstreaming 'transforming' attempts to address gender inequality at the structural level and eradicate gender bias on the part of policy makers. By focusing on the policy makers "this strategy aims at a fundamental transformation, eliminating gender biases, and redirecting policies so that they can contribute towards a goal of gender equality (Verloo, 2001).

Tinkering

Tinkering for women has occurred at the international level since 1945 and the UN Charter. The UN established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), under the Economic and Social Council in 1946 and one of the Commission's first goals was to establish the equality of men and women in the UN Declaration of Human Rights through language which was more inclusive and by arguing against references to "men" as a synonym for humanity and phrases like "men are brothers" (United Nations, 1995). In the early years, the CSW focused on establishing and codifying the legal rights of women. The Convention on the Legal Rights of Women was adopted in 1952 and was the first international law instrument to "recognize and protect the political rights of women everywhere by spelling out that women, on an equal basis with men, were entitled to vote in any election, run for election to any office, and hold any public office or exercise any public function under national law."¹⁰ Economic rights and the principle of equal pay for equal work were established in the 1951 Convention on Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. Social and cultural rights were tackled in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Commission attempted to remove discrimination in marriage¹¹ and protect women from cultural practices that violated women's physical integrity and human rights (United Nations, 1995).

The 1960s and 1970s saw moves by feminist activists both inside and outside with UN to strengthen legal rights for women so that they would have more actual impact. The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted in 1967 and finally became the legally binding Convention for the Elimination of All Forms

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 640(VII).

¹¹ These included the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (adopted 29 January 1957), the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (adopted 7 November 1962), and the Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (adopted 1 November 1965).

of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979.¹² CEDAW continues today to be the preeminent international instrument of *de jure* gender equality, although the UN recognizes that *de facto* discrimination against women still exists. International Women's Year was held in 1975 and the UN declared a Decade for Women from 1976-1985. Three World Conferences on Women were held during the Decade and while the Plans of Action decided upon during these Conferences were not binding, they did establish three institutions which continue on today to work on women's issues. The Division for the Advancement of Women is the UN Secretariat branch responsible for working with the Committee on the Status of Women and the Committee to promote CEDAW. The UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) promotes research and training to support women participating in public life. The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) funds projects for and by women in developing countries (Steady, 2005). Together these pillars form the backbone of the gender equity framework set out by the United Nations.

On the European level, the European Economic Community included the principle of equal pay for women and men in Article 119 of the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Article 119 was not implemented in the member countries so a series of Directives in the 1970s and 1980s required national legislation to address issues of equal pay for equal work, equal access to employment, training and promotion, working conditions and social security (Rees, 1998).¹³ In 1992, a Directive was passed to ensure the safety and health of workers who are pregnant, breastfeeding or had recently given birth.¹⁴ Directives carry the fullest weight of the EC or EU and require national laws to accommodate them. However, member states have discretion in implementation of Directives, which often leaves the Directives lacking teeth at the national level.

The critique of these types of equal treatment measures is that they are "rooted in a narrow distributive conception of justice and focus the debate upon the allocation of positions within a hierarchy which is given" (Rees, 1998, p. 29) while ignoring the structural relationships between men and women, the public and private spheres and gendered organisations which

¹² A similar move away from acts which are voluntarily accepted towards legally binding measures will be seen again in 25 years in the arguments towards requiring a legally binding Gender Duty at the UK level. Again and again, feminists must face the reality that leaving equality up to voluntary measures does not work

¹³ EC Equality Directives 75/117 (1975), 76/207 (1976), 79/7 (1978), 86/378 (1986), and the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriages (adopted 7 November 1962). Marriages (adopted 7 November 1962).

¹⁴ EC Directive 92/85 (1992).

systematically act as barriers to women's advancement. They are also, often, ineffective. Measures to ensure women's equality at the UN and EU level are rarely enforced with the same tenacity as other binding treaties and Directives (Rees, 1998). Member states water down the standards (Rossilli, 1997) and legislation is often so broad that tangible results are impossible to achieve. However, tinkering measures are necessary measures taken to provide many of the legal bases from which feminists can work to expand and solidify women's equality.

Tailoring

The United Nations promotes tailoring, in conjunction with tinkering, through its focus on development issues for women. Tailoring measures require that women are seen, not as a group simply needing to be on par with men, but as a distinct group with its own needs and requirements. Thus, UN field operations have focused on the "integration of women in development by ending gender-based discrimination and facilitating equal access for women to resources, legal rights, opportunities and so on" (Steady, 2005). Women-specific projects, gender-disaggregated statistics and outcomes ensuring women are counted all tailor development to women's needs.

At the international level, so called 'soft laws' often fit the role of tailoring measures for women. 'Soft laws' open up avenues for positive action programmes. Although they do not carry the weight of international law with them, they "move beyond the *laissez faire*, equal treatment approach, and are based on a recognition of the differences between men and women" (Rees, 1998). Recognizing that simply having a legal basis for equal treatment does not ensure the implementation of the law, positive action and 'soft law' promotes a view that women form a unique group who require active protection and the positive promotion of networks, skills, training and education.

The European Union's soft law initiatives were especially prominent in the 1980s. The 1984 *Recommendation on the Promotion of Positive Action for Women* (84/331) and the 1987 *Recommendation on Vocational Training for Women* (87/342) both set out positive action frameworks as a way to eliminate inequalities in employment and training (Rees, 1998). The 1990s also saw a series of EU Recommendations and Resolutions passed to address issues of sexual harassment, child care, parental leave, and the promotion of equal opportunities in

Structural Funds.¹⁵ The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, Article 141.4, allows states to introduce positive action, although this only applies to employment, leaving many other policy areas untouched (Lombardo and Meier, 2007). Even with the promotion of soft laws, positive action has not become legally binding through a Directive, which “reveals the uneven evolution of EU equality concepts as far as legal instruments are concerned” (Lombardo and Meier, 2007, p.54).

Tailoring through the use of positive action and soft law measures is still very much in use at both the UN and EU levels. This is part of an ongoing shift from equal treatment, ‘tinkering’ legislation towards a “deepening of focus in order to tackle the structural conditions of gender inequality and to challenge the gender dimensions of political power” (Lombardo and Meier, 2007, p. 56). Although tailoring measures deepen the focus and shed light on new areas where gender inequality persists, the lack of binding legislation to protect positive action raise questions over the ability of these measures to effectively change the status quo and suggest that the political meanings of gender equality are constantly being negotiated by political actors (Stratigaki, 2005).

Transforming

As feminists continued to struggle with gender inequality, they began to realize that a focus on individual women ignored the structural and social constraints on women. Equal treatment legislation and positive action approaches still rely on a conceptualization which makes the ‘problem’ of inequality women themselves (Rees, 1998). Still based on an individualised, rights-based conception of equality, these approaches do not attempt to undermine and change the basic structures and institutions of policy making which act as barriers for women. The current understanding of gender and organisations has moved from women in organisations to conceptualising organisations and institutions as gendered (see for example, Ashcroft and Mumby, 2004; Britton, 2000; Martin and Collinson, 2002; Martin, 2003, 2006; Connell, 2005a, 2006a). This transition is predicated upon the idea that not only do the people who work in organisations bring with them their embodied gender, but that gender is built into the very structures, practices and procedures which make up organisational life. Thus, it is not enough to try to change people, their concepts about gender, or their gendered practices; rather change must also occur to gendered organisations. Within equality policy circles,

¹⁵ EU Equality Recommendations and Resolutions 82/357 (1982), 84/331 (1984), 84/161 (1984), 87/342 (1987), 90/157 (1990), 92/31 (1992), 92/241 (1992), 94/231 (1994), 94/368 (1994), 95/168 (1995).

transforming these gendered institutional and organisational structures has thus become the current focus of the equality landscape. Gender mainstreaming policies are the conduit through which this transformation can arguably occur.

Squires (2007b) maintains that mainstreaming, along with gender quotas and policy agencies, is part of a process of institutionalising gender equality in government and central in the movement for global equality for women. When taken together they “promise to secure greater gender equality within equality processes” (p. 13) by combining women-centric presence, voice and processes in government. Gender mainstreaming is part of a larger international movement that goes beyond specific national contexts (Kardam, 2004) and is a result of international feminist activism. International feminists are harnessing the tools of globalisation to help them combat the inequalities that come at the hands of globalization. Their aim is to raise awareness of inequality and propose ways to address institutional and structural problems (Eschle, 2001; True and Mintrom, 2001). The power of these transnational movements is so great that True and Mintrom (2001) consider it to be “the most compelling explanation for the diffusion of gender mainstreaming” (p. 11) throughout the world. The global nature of gender mainstreaming is central to its transformational aspirations.

Conclusion: Challenges of Gender Mainstreaming

In our more complex understandings of gendered organisations, we have begun to question how and why women still face discrimination in state bureaucracies. At the same time, gender mainstreaming researchers question why the radical nature of the strategy has not been implemented and institutionalised throughout governmental organisation. Bringing a focus on organisations and bureaucracies to the literature on gender mainstreaming highlights an important cross-over that is currently underappreciated. Placing the gender mainstreaming agenda solidly within bureaucratic political organisations begins to highlight the reasons gender mainstreaming faces challenges. The central contention of this thesis is that the radical promise of gender mainstreaming is hindered because it is a strategy which must work within the confines of masculinist bureaucracies and because it is predicated on changing bureaucratic norms by using the same bureaucratic processes which are already in use.

Gender mainstreaming attempts to address these powerful sedimentations of masculinised power by moving the focus from dealing with incidents of individual sexism towards seeing the ways that norms, structures and processes in bureaucracies are gendered masculine in ways which institutionalise bias and disadvantage women. The gender mainstreaming strategy is also predicated on a method which utilizes many of these same norms, structures and processes to implement and institutionalise the agenda. This often leads to the co-option of the radical aims of the agenda by the status quo. The transmission of gender mainstreaming from a theoretical global policy agenda to becoming meaningful at the local, organisational level can be subverted by a process which relies on already established bureaucratic practices.

In addition, the unstable definition of the term gender in gender mainstreaming highlights continued tensions among those who study and apply gender mainstreaming. The uneven application of terms and definitions, which allows institutions to strategise specifically, also inhibits actors' ability to implement and institutionalise a coherent agenda. Thus, the full radical potential of gender mainstreaming becomes lost in the inconsistencies of the agenda.

In this chapter, I have entered into some of the critical debates surrounding gender and organisations and gender mainstreaming. Focusing on the literature surrounding gendered organisations and feminist engagement with state bureaucracies, I highlighted the ways that past feminist engagements shed light on tensions that gender mainstreaming advocates will find as they implement their agenda. Guided change agendas that seek to transform bureaucracies from the inside must contend with the masculine power that pervades gendered organisations. Paradoxically, attempting structural change is limited in many ways by the same structures which feminists hope to change. Using the tinkering, tailoring, transforming model I traced the development of gender equality policy at the international level, highlighting the non-linear aspects of that development. In making this argument, I highlighted the history of gender mainstreaming and pointed to the ways it has become central to the international gender equality landscape. I also problematised the idea of 'gender' in gender mainstreaming, and suggested that feminist theorizing around understanding gender as a practice has impacted on how feminists think about gender mainstreaming.

In the next chapter, I return to the tinkering, tailoring, transforming framework to discuss the literature on gender mainstreaming in the UK and Scotland specifically. My aim is to point

out the similarities and differences between mainstreaming internationally and mainstreaming at the British level. I highlight the importance of devolution in Scottish mainstreaming and focus the discussion even more narrowly on the Gender Equality Duty.

2

Gender Mainstreaming in the UK and Scotland

The previous chapter set out the critical debates which occur at the international level in respect to gender mainstreaming. While gender mainstreaming is a global phenomenon which has roots in international institutions and the transnational feminist movement, I maintain that in order to truly understand its potential for radical change as well as what limits that potential, there needs to be a focus on gender mainstreaming at the more local level. Much of the literature examines gender mainstreaming as a global policy initiative or examines the success of its implementation from a national perspective. There remains a gap in the literature surrounding the everyday practices of gender mainstreaming from the perspective of the actors engaged in the work. In order to appreciate the everyday work of mainstreaming, it is important to set out the context within which mainstreaming actors function.

In this chapter I portray the landscape of gender mainstreaming in the UK and Scotland. I explore the national and sub-national contexts within the international movement of gender mainstreaming. I focus on the Scottish case and highlight the asymmetric development of gender mainstreaming policies in the UK and Scotland due to devolution. I also examine the Civil Service as a bureaucracy and point to ways this impacts the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in Scotland. I explore the history of the Gender Equality Duty (GED), placing it within an equality mainstreaming context, and argue that an examination of the implementation of aspects of the GED provides insight into gendered change in political contexts.

To help move through the UK and Scottish gender and equality landscape, I will again draw upon the “tinkering, tailoring, and transforming” (Rees, 1998, 2000, 2005) distinctions that I outlined in the previous chapter. This categorization portrays different approaches to gender equality in a schematic way that moves from the likes of equal treatment legislation (tinkering) through positive action frameworks (tailoring) onwards towards gender mainstreaming (transforming). As mentioned previously, using such a heuristic device is problematic because it can serve to fossilize time periods and ignore the overlap and interconnections between different approaches (Daly, 2005). However, I find it a useful way

to categorise the equality landscape and help me discuss the literature on gender equality in the UK and Scotland. I also highlight the challenges of mainstreaming which occur on the national and sub-national levels as I attempt to contextualise the Scottish and UK experiences within the international gender mainstreaming movement.

The UK Landscape

Tinkering

The tinkering stage of equality legislation is associated with attempts to ensure the equal treatment of women to men¹⁶. Historically, tinkering policies in the UK were at their strongest in the 1970s, when feminist interventions in state politics gained saliency. They also resurfaced as part of the equal opportunities movement after Labour came back to power in the 1997 elections. During most of the Conservative years, however, the UK paid limited lip service to women's issues (Bilton, 2005; Byrne, 1996). Any work that was done could be explained by the need to conform to external pressures from the UN and EU (Dickens, 2007; Meehan and Collins, 1996). Examples of tinkering include early equality legislation such as the *Equal Pay Act 1970* and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1975* both of which made it illegal to discriminate based on sex or marital status. The *Employment Protection Act 1975* opened the way for better maternity leave and pay provisions. The 1983 extension of the *Equal Pay Act* ensures that work of equal value is included and the *Employment Act* was updated in 1999 and 2002 to include measures which promote work-life balance and/or are family-friendly.¹⁷ The *Work and Families Act 2006* also extends the rights of employees in caring roles to ask for flexible working arrangements (Dickens, 2007). These pieces of legislation, while important in setting out legislative frameworks for equal opportunities, do not address the relational aspect between men and women or attempt to reorganise the structures which perpetuate inequality. Thus, the move towards tailored and transformational policies came with the recognition that women's needs and interests needed to be specifically addressed (Rees, 2005).

¹⁶ The tinkering phase of equality legislation also encompasses for example, the *Race Relations Act 1976* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*.

¹⁷ These measures include parental leave, paid paternity leave and emergency family leave, and the right to have requests for flexible working arrangements to be taken seriously.

Tailoring

Tailoring policies attempt to address specific group disadvantage through targeted programmes and measures. These encompass a wide range of measures, but are often referred to as positive action policies. Often justified as a way to address historical inequality, positive action recognises that certain groups of people, not just individuals, face barriers and group disadvantage (Squires, 2007b). Positive action policies for women aim to identify and overcome specific barriers women face in employment, business and politics (Rees, 2005). While projects and training are often part of the tailoring framework, quotas and women's policy agencies are the primary focus of the work on this topic. The creation of women's policy agencies¹⁸ and the implementation of quotas move institutions away from a focus on equal treatment to a focus on ensuring that women's specific presence and voice are part of politics (Squires, 2007b). The literature on both quotas and women's policy agencies is extensive and varied¹⁹. My aim here is not to review these literatures, but rather to use them to create a time line of policy agencies and quota measures to help contextualize the wider equality landscape in the UK.

Women's Policy Agencies

The establishment of women's policy agencies acknowledges that women have specific needs and issues which are potentially better served through group representation.²⁰ An early example of a women's policy agency is the Women's National Commission (WNC) which was established in 1969 as the official and independent advisory body which would present the views of women to the government of the United Kingdom. The WNC was founded to prepare for the forthcoming *Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts* (Stokes, 2003). Today it is part of the Government's Equalities Office and works alongside the Women and Equality Unit. Another important women's policy agency, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established as a "quasi-autonomous state agency" (Squires, 2007a) in 1976 to

¹⁸ Also sometimes referred to as policy machineries. See for a discussion Squires 2007b, p. 78 and Rai, 2003.

¹⁹ See for example Caul, 2001; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005; Krook and Squires, 2006, Lovenduski, 2005; Mackay, 2003; Squires, 2005a on quotas and Rai, 2003; Squires, 2007a, 2007b; Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004; Stokes, 2003 on women's policy agencies.

²⁰ For an in-depth discussion of the pros and cons of women's policy agencies including issues of representation and the potential of women's policy agencies to essentialise women see the chapter titled "Feminist Advocacy? Policy Agencies" in Squires, 2007b.

oversee the *Sex Discrimination Act* and kept a narrow remit limited to the formal antidiscrimination agenda throughout the Conservative years (Squires, 2007a). Although established early in the history of UK equality, these two groups continue to have a substantial presence in the UK equality landscape.

The Conservative years did not produce a significant growth of women's policy agencies in Britain. 1986 saw the establishment of a Ministerial Group of Women which was later elevated to Cabinet status in 1992 (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Stokes, 2003). The Conservatives did consistently increase funding for the EOC (Lovenduski, 2005). Bilton (2005) suggests that any moves the Conservatives made towards increasing a profile on women were in response to the growing salience of women's issues in the Labour party and out of a need to provide a report on progress made towards women's issues at the upcoming Beijing conference. Stokes (2003) points to the assimilation of EU regulations favourable towards women as the reason behind the moves the Conservative party made. There was little real impact made by these measures, which were mostly done on paper with no real commitment to action (Byrne, 1996) and "the second significant phase in the creation of national machinery only came after the 1997 general election" (Stokes, 2003, p. 184).

In June 1997, the Blair administration established the Women's Unit (WU) with the remit of "scrutinising legislation to provide sexual equality and with promoting female friendly policies" (Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004). The Labour party had taken over Government due in large part to a concerted effort spurred on by feminist activists inside the party (Lovecy, 2007) to secure the 'women's vote' as part of their strategy to win the election (Bilton, 2005; Short, 1996). The WU was one of the ways New Labour attempted to show its commitment to women's issues. At the same time, the Women's National Commission was also revamped to work alongside the WU as a "necessary and desirable organization" (Stokes, 2003) but one which would increase its membership to include a wider range of women's organisations and individuals and have a more active profile in both public and governmental life. The WU retained its autonomy and independence, though the organization kept its funding from the government. Over the next 4 years, the WU struggled to clarify its purpose and was criticised for not providing clear or effective leadership on women's issues. It suffered from limited resources, patchy leadership, and a lack of high-level commitment (Squires, 2007a; Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004). It was during this time, however, that gender mainstreaming became part of the remit of the WU, due largely to the UN and EU commitments to gender mainstreaming (see discussion in the following sections). Gender

mainstreaming was formally adopted to complement the anti-discrimination approach to tackling gender inequalities in 1998.²¹ In addition, the inclusion of the WU and the WNC in the Civil Service headquarters was framed as moving equalities to ‘the heart of government’ (Stokes, 2003).

Quotas

During the 1990’s other positive action, tailoring measures, including quotas, were used in conjunction with policy agencies. Quotas attempt to tailor the election process to help rectify widespread imbalances among women and men in the candidate selection and election processes. Thus, they fit squarely within the tailoring framework. They represent “a form of positive action that is introduced to remedy the structural inequality that results from the institutional discrimination that characterises political structures” (Squires, 2007b, p. 93). The Labour party established the use of quotas in 1992, but they really came into wide-use practice in the 1997 elections and after devolution.²² Neither of the other major parties, the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats, have an official quota policy though both do use softer, informal measures to encourage women to stand and run for office. For example, the Conservatives agree to the principal of equal representation and the Liberal Democrats require that there be at least one man and one woman shortlisted (Krook and Squires, 2006).

The Labour decision to implement quotas was based on a variety of factors including internal feminist pressure from within the party, external pressure from women’s groups, and sustained lobbying from the women’s policy agencies, especially the EOC (Short, 1996; Squires, 2005a). These groups saw quotas as a useful measure to help increase the number of women participating in politics. While women’s presence in formal institutions of politics does not automatically translate into improved policy for women (Childs and Krook, 2006), there are ‘critical mass’ arguments which suggest that the inclusion of more women reframes the policy process in a positive way for women (see for example, Dahlerup, 1988; Lovenduski, 2001). Strategically, quotas, along with the promise of a Minister for Women, were framed as an integral part of the strategy to win (and later, to keep) women’s votes.²³

²¹ The WU *Delivering for Women* document and the *Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment* officially set out guidelines for gender mainstreaming in 1998.

²² There was great uncertainty about the future of quotas after a 1996 ruling which found that all-women shortlists went against equal opportunity legislation. However, the 2002 *Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill* allows parties to implement positive action measures without fear of a legal challenge.

²³ See Lovecy, 2007 for an in-depth analysis of the framing of gender quotas within New Labour.

Along with women's policy agencies, quotas continue to have a strong presence in the UK political landscape, thus keeping positive action measures firmly in place as part of the equality landscape.

Positive action measures often only address barriers in securing equality of opportunity, not barriers towards securing equality of outcomes. There was a global recognition in the late 1990s that instruments of positive action did not go far enough in renegotiating the structures of inequality to allow for equality of outcome. This recognition was due in part to the fact that positive action measures are often underfunded, short term, and piecemeal (Rees, 2005). By 2001, the move to mainstreaming was already in place in the women's policy agencies in Whitehall and thus, I consider this to be the break between 'tailoring' and 'transforming' stages in the UK. In the UK, gender equality advocates in government also recognised the limitations of positive action and called for further measures to be used in conjunction with the legislation, women's policy agencies and quota requirements already in place.

Transforming

Gender and Equality Mainstreaming

By the early 2000's, the transformation stage, most often associated with gender mainstreaming, began to play itself out in the UK. Similar to the international perspective on the gender mainstreaming agenda, advocates at the UK level argue it can help to transform the institutional landscape through a fundamental change in the way political organisations are structured and the way that policy making is done (Rees, 2005; Squires, 2007a, 2007b). Yet, the gender mainstreaming strategy suffers many of the same challenges at the national UK level as it does at the international level. These challenges include lack of support and resources, the potential for gender mainstreaming to become too technocratic and lose its social justice approach, and the institutionalisation of the business case. In this section, I provide a timeline for the introduction of gender mainstreaming at the UK level, along with a discussion on its potential for transformational change and the barriers that gender mainstreaming faces as a guided change agenda.

At the outset of this discussion on gender mainstreaming's rise to prominence as the 'most modern' (Daly, 2005) approach to gender equality in the UK, I want to reiterate the caution

expressed in most literature– that it must be contextualised and set among other approaches to gender equality (Clavero and Daly, 2002; Daly, 2005; Squires, 2007b; Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004; Veitch, 2005). Gender mainstreaming is not part of a fixed and distinct ‘era’ of gender equality measures, but sits with equal treatment and positive action in a “mix of approaches” (Daly, 2005, p. 438; see also Breitenbach, Brown, Mackay and Webb, 2002) that is more complex and nuanced than a simple periodised approach.. However, thinking about mainstreaming in relation to the ‘transforming’ period helps me contextualise it within the whole of the equality policy landscape.

By 2001, gender mainstreaming was already part of the work being done by women’s policy agencies in the UK. After the 2001 general election, the Women’s Unit became the Women and Equality Unit²⁴ and strengthened its focus on mainstreaming. It became the sponsor for the Equal Opportunities Commission and Women’s National Commission and focused on an integrationist model which attempted to bring a gender expertise to the existing policy arena, rather than attempting to set the policy agenda (Squires, 2007a). Mainstreaming became a central aspect of integrating equality into the policy-making process²⁵ and a commitment to gender mainstreaming became more firmly entrenched in the equality discourse of the UK government from this time. However, as I will argue, it has been a much more salient discourse for the devolved governments, although it has not materialised to be particularly effective anywhere in the UK (Bilton, 2005; Squires, 2007a).

The experience of implementing mainstreaming in the UK shares in common many of the difficulties identified internationally, leading analysts to question its transformational potential at all levels. Materially, the WEU (and thus the WNC and EOC) both lacks governmental support and struggles with limited funding (Squires, 2007a; Veitch, 2005). On a deeper level, the commitment to mainstreaming as a social justice policy is often subsumed to other discourses of intent. Mainstreaming is framed as part of New Labour’s commitment to a modernised government (Durose and Gains, 2007; Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004), through an economic lens which emphasises “work and economic efficiency as key values within society” (Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004), or simply as a less important motivation for policy improvements (Randall, 2000). Similar to the international level in regards to

²⁴ The fate of the WU was uncertain before the election, with many commentators predicting that the Government would not continue to support it (however, marginally it had been supported since 1997). However, it lived through the election (Durose and Gains, 2007; Squires, 2007a; Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004).

²⁵ See <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/> for further details.

implementation, the commitment from government to a gender mainstreaming strategy often comes in technical and bureaucratic forms. For example, the production of gender disaggregated statistics and the Public Service Agreement which ties Treasury funding to departmental publications concerning gender equality targets and developments (Veitch, 2005) are promoted over more fundamental changes to government structures and policy making processes. Finally, in terms of institutionalisation, the ‘business’ case for mainstreaming often trumps the rights-based rhetoric favoured by those who see mainstreaming as a transformational policy and practice.²⁶ As on the international level, feminist evaluations at the UK level find that mainstreaming “is all too frequently undermined by assimilatory pressures in practice” (Squires, 2007b) even though the language that describes the radical potential of mainstreaming is still in use.

Key International Drivers: Women’s Equality Policy in the UK

UK mainstreaming works within the constraints also seen at the international level. This is due to the fact that the UK took many of the ideas, concepts and frameworks regarding mainstreaming out of the international context. The UK’s development of its mainstreaming policies was influenced by European and international definitions and norms, as UK advocates of mainstreaming turned to lessons learned in other countries when they introduced the policy at home (Clavero and Daly, 2002; Mackay and Bilton, 2000). The mainstreaming strategy in the UK was driven forward in response to international pressures, resulting in an uncritical appropriation of already problematic notions.

The United Nations

As discussed in the previous chapter, the term ‘gender mainstreaming’ came into use as a result of the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and was accepted, defined and endorsed by the EU in 2000²⁷ (Rees, 2005). Directly after the Beijing conference, the WNC and the EOC drew up a National Action Plan that outlined the UK

²⁶ Veitch (2005) points this out in regards to the WEU’s website. However, this has since been changed and the discussion of gender mainstreaming today is more nuanced and in line with a complex understanding of gender; however it retains a technocratic, process-focused outlook. See http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/equality/mainstreaming_explained.htm for evidence.

²⁷ See the EC’s *Beijing +5: An Overview of the European Union Follow-Up and Preparations* as quoted in Rees, 2005, p. 558.

implementation of the UN Global Platform for Action and drew heavily on the promise of gender mainstreaming (Bilton, 2005). The Labour party used the term gender mainstreaming as early as 1997 in the remit of the new Women's Unit and again in the 2001 refashioning into the WEU (Squires, 2007a). Today, the WEU has responsibility for reporting every four years to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on measures taken in effect of the Convention²⁸. The UK is also an elected member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and thus has a commitment to take part in the CSW's mission to provide reports and recommendations to ECOSOC on gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women's rights²⁹.

While ratifying UN Conventions does not provide a binding, legislative impetus for policy at the national level, conventions do play an important role as external drivers for equality policy. European Commission Treaties and Directives, on the other hand, are legally binding and require the UK government to implement the regulations placed before it. As with other literatures in this chapter, there is a varied and complex literature looking at the role of the EU in British equality legislation (see, for example, Beveridge, Nott and Stephen, 2000a and 2000b; Beveridge and Nott, 2002; Mazey, 2000, 2002; Meehan and Collins, 1996). I will draw from this literature in order to outline the main legislation that acted as a driver of mainstreaming policy in Britain and to provide the context for current gender equality policy. Interestingly much of this literature is from the international, top-down perspective. There is less from a national perspective, looking up. That is a gap this project is helping to fill.

The European Union

The EU enshrined the principle of equal treatment between men and women as early as 1957 in the Treaty of Rome. This was followed by Directives in the 1970s which required member states that did not have sex equality legislation to implement it³⁰. The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam and subsequent Directives are the most current legal bases for equal treatment and gender mainstreaming (Rees, 2002). The Treaty of Amsterdam calls for a "dual strategy" treatment of equality, providing legal redress for positive action measures and including a

²⁸ The 6th *Periodic Report to CEDAW*, delivered in 2007, is available for download from the WEU webpage http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/eu_int/un.htm

²⁹ http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/eu_int/un.htm

³⁰ For example, the 1976 *Equal Treatment Directive* (76/207) established the principle of equal treatment between men and women

formal commitment to gender mainstreaming,³¹ which pushed the UK to promote its own twin track scheme towards gender equality. The *Equal Treatment Directive* was amended in 2002 by *Directive 2002/73/EC* to strengthen the principle of equal treatment, incorporate European Court of Justice case law, and provide for practical implementation. This Directive pushed the UK to update its *Sex Discrimination Act* to include new provisions on sexual harassment, bullying and maternity leave. Other Directives on Race³² and Employment³³ have also been implemented by the UK (Dickens, 2007). In all of these examples, mainstreaming is framed as a strategy, or an approach, to advance gender equality (Booth and Bennett, 2002)

Although the UN and EU have been important drivers in moving equality measures forward in the UK, “European equality law is not without limitations which echo or are reflected in British legislation” (Dickens, 2007). First, the versions of equality and mainstreaming passed down from the international level to the UK level focus on “integrationist” (Jahan, 1995) approaches. Integrationist approaches attempt to ensure gender (and other equality strands) are linked to wider agendas, such as modernisation, good governance, or community cohesion. As previously noted, this is how the WEU redefined itself in 2001. In the best of circumstances, an integration approach leads to an increased visibility of gender and other equality issues and facilitates the mainstreaming process. However, an integration approach can also mean that the equality issues are subsumed to the larger, more politically salient agendas (Rees, 2005). Second, the focus on technocratic methods of delivering mainstreaming again inhibits its potential to address fundamental gender relationships cemented in political organisations and the policy making process. Mainstreaming can become mired in “rhetorical entrapment” (Squires, 2007b) whereby sex disaggregated statistics, research, and experts use language and policy frames which adhere to the status quo rather than fundamentally change them. While integration can be a useful strategy as a method to cross bridges with those without the expertise in gender and equality issues, this method runs the same risk of assimilation that I discussed earlier in regards to the WEU promoting a cohesive and effective mainstreaming strategy.

³¹ Examples of positive action measures include the Medium Term Action Programmes on Equal Treatment for Women and Men. Gender mainstreaming is enshrined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam.

³² The *Race Equality Directive* (2000/43)

³³ The *Employment Equality Direction* (2000/78)

The UK has been required to embrace the terms and conditions set out internationally. The UN holds a normative role in the establishment of UK equality and mainstreaming policy while EU Directives ensure legislative enforcement. Therefore, the problems inherent in mainstreaming at the international level exist at the national level as well. On the other hand, both the UN and EU have been sites of and bear the marks of feminist interventions, ensuring that member states have to engage with feminist ideas. Within the UK government there are continued attempts by the Equal Opportunities Commission/Commission on Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and the WEU to keep a feminist perspective salient in the equality and mainstreaming landscape. Unfortunately, this is a difficult struggle considering the institutional landscape that I have described throughout this chapter. The landscape of gender equality policy not only impacts the UK government but also plays an important role in setting the boundaries for actions taken by the devolved governments. The remainder of the chapter discusses the Scottish gender mainstreaming approach.

The Scottish Landscape

Scotland's approach to gender mainstreaming is directly linked to devolution. Devolution in Scotland was justified on the basis that it would make government more responsive to the wishes of the people of Scotland since much of the population of Scotland felt detached from the Westminster government (Keating, 2005). Thus, in May 1997, Tony Blair and the Labour government were elected with a promise of creating devolved institutions in Scotland. In late 1997, a referendum was held which resulted in a "yes" vote in favour of devolution. The *Scotland Act 1998* (Cabinet Office, 1998) set out the parameters for what would become the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive (later Government). Devolution ensured that a new Scottish Parliament would have the power to pass and enact legislation in devolved areas of policy, including health, education, and housing. The Scotland Act does not list devolved matters; instead it lists matters which are reserved to the UK government. This includes such areas as defence, foreign affairs and, importantly for this thesis, the Civil Service. Equal opportunity is also an area of policy which remains reserved to the UK government; however, the Scottish Parliament has the power to enact certain duties on public bodies in Scotland to actively promote equality. This is set out under the terms of the second exemption to the equal opportunities reservation in the Scotland Act.³⁴

³⁴ As explained in the Sewel Memorandum on the *Equality Bill*
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Sewel/SessionTwo/EqualityBill.html>

Devolution adds another layer to the already complex landscape of gender and equality policy and legislation in Britain. Feminists in Scotland saw devolution as a key opportunity to ensure gender issues, and equality more generally, were a focus of the new Scottish Parliament and Executive and campaigned strongly for equal representation, family-friendly policies and feminist values to be included in the newly formed political organisations (Breitenbach and Mackay, 2001; Brown, 2001; McKay and Gillespie, 2005). Devolution provided the space for reflection on what was happening on the UK and international levels concerning the treatment of equality. It opened up the possibility for a new perspective and different action regarding the fight against inequality.

The spaces opened through the devolution process pointed to changed opportunities in regards to a new parliament, the commitment to key principles of equality and a commitment to the mainstreaming process. However, these opportunities must be viewed within their institutional context. Even with the changes brought about by devolution, the new Scottish institutions were not so far removed from their predecessors. As I highlight below, powerful continuities continued to constrain the efforts of equality advocates in Scotland. This was particularly true due to the bureaucratic nature of the Civil Service and the Executive.

The UK Civil Service is a specific type of bureaucracy. It is the administrative machinery for forming policy and enacting legislation in government. It is an arm of the Executive branch, staffed by individuals who are supposed to be able to work on policy matters without having to worry about party affiliation. The Civil Service administers on behalf of the nation and its people, not for whichever party is in power. Yet because the Civil Service is a bureaucracy, it shares many of the same characteristics as other types of state bureaucratic systems. In fact, in many ways, the UK Civil Service is a classic example of bureaucracy. The British Civil Service is based on ideals of supervisory regulation, a generalist mentality and high levels of internal mobility (Kvill, 2001). Whitehall officials see themselves as distinctly separate from partisan politics and act as mediators of society-at-large (Parry, 2003). The Civil Service functions through rules, regulations and procedures and celebrates its objectivity, neutrality and commitment to merit.

Drawing on the lessons from the earlier discussion on gender and organisations in Chapter One, we can see the Civil Service as a gendered bureaucracy that supports itself on

masculinised principles and power. For example, recruitment and promotion in the Civil Service is traditionally geared towards people who work continuously (Margetts, 1996) and calmness and intellectual detachment are prized personal characteristics for those who lead the Civil Service (Parry, 2003). Parry (2005) notes that “like any bureaucracy, the civil service can be expected to exhibit a mixture of acceptance of and resistance to...changes” (p. 62). In relation to gender change, Watson (1992) determined that the Civil Service operates uniquely in that it is relatively open to progressive equal opportunities policies but also maintains an almost exclusive culture which limits the number and type of women who succeed. It is apparent that “organisational expressions of masculine power and privilege seem remarkably resilient to change” (Halford and Leonard, 2001, p. 213). As in other state bureaucracies, change within the Civil Service is bound by structural constraints resistant to new ways of working.

There have been successive waves of attempted reforms to the Civil Service in the post-war period. These waves have met with varied successes. Most recently, efforts were made at the end of the 1990s to change some of the cultural norms within the Civil Service. The Labour government’s 1999 White Paper on *Modernising Government* (Cabinet Office, 1999³⁵) and the process of devolution both focused on Civil Service reform. Principles such as transparency, accessibility, consultation and gender balance came to the forefront of debates on better ways to govern as both the new Labour government and the new devolved governments aimed to show that they could do better than the traditional Westminster model (Parry, 2005). As I will show in Chapters Four through Seven, the impacts of these efforts were limited.

In Scotland, particularly, devolution did not result in any fundamental changes to the Civil Service. Officials of the devolved Civil Service remain part of the Home Civil Service, are subject to the Crown, and their managerial arrangements are reserved to Whitehall. Many of the norms and practices of the Scottish Office, the earlier reincarnation of Scottish administration, carried into the newly formed Scottish Executive. For example, leaders of the Scottish Management Group were pulled from the Scottish Office, senior Executive officials embraced Whitehall style norms, rules and relationships, and secondments to and from Whitehall are considered an essential aspect of career growth (Parry, 2003). Those aspects of the Civil Service that were deliberately changed, such as a new organisational structure or the

³⁵ <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm43/4310/4310.htm>

added role of special advisors, are superficial to the everyday and informal workings of the Civil Service.³⁶ The Civil Service remains a masculine bureaucracy and this thesis works from the premise that the Scottish Civil Service is an instance of a gendered organisation that is not very different than its predecessors.

Thus, the continuity within the Executive and the Civil Service inhibits radical change from an organisational perspective. From a policy perspective, devolution did provide some openings for a new way of thinking about the gender equality agenda. Yet, this space and these possibilities were still framed within the larger context of UK and international tinkering, tailoring and transforming measures.

Tinkering

Devolution opened the door for new policy machineries dedicated to gender and equality in Scotland. However, the power to pass equality legislation is reserved to the central government and current equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation passed at the UK level retains power at the Scottish level. Thus, the *Equal Pay Act*, the *Sex Discrimination Act* and others set the legislative framework for Scotland. Tinkering – or the passing of equal treatment legislation – remains reserved to the UK level, so tailoring and transforming approaches have been the focus of gender equality advocates. As I discuss in the next sections, the *Scotland Act* empowers the Scottish Parliament to encourage equal opportunities and to impose duties on public sector organisations. These duties hold organisations to specific standards and require that organisations carry out their functions with due regard for equal opportunity. This approach is much more closely aligned with tailoring and transforming approaches.

Tailoring and Transforming: A Dual-Pronged Diversity Approach

Devolution came at a critical point in the larger equality debate. By 1999, positive action measures such as quotas and women's policy agencies were shown to be effective in helping increase awareness of women's issues as well as provide more opportunities to women. Concurrently, mainstreaming was gaining prominence as the best way to move the gender and

³⁶ See Parry, 2003 for a good discussion of behavioral, organisational, identity and policy changes that the new Scottish Civil Service did – or did not – go through.

equality platform forward. In tandem with these trends, equalities advocates embraced the move towards a diversity approach as part of the effort to encourage seeing the intersecting nature of discrimination and inequality. The diversity approach broadened the ‘silo’ or ‘single strand’ approach to equality work in which individual issues such as age, gender, etc., were addressed individually without regard to their possible interconnections. In this framing, gender equality policy is part of a more general strategy for equal opportunity and gender mainstreaming becomes part of a larger policy of equality mainstreaming.

As a concrete manifestation of the shift towards the diversity approach, the Equality Unit in the Scottish Executive was founded with the remit to look after the six equality strands set out by the EU (gender, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief, race, disability) plus asylum seekers, refugees and gypsies/travellers.³⁷ This is different than the Women’s Equality Unit, which began with a remit specifically relating to gender and has since been expanded to include other responsibilities. At the same time, and following this diversity model, the Scottish Parliament set up a standing committee on Equal Opportunities. This committee is responsible for overseeing all equalities policies.

While the general equalities framework was widely accepted, some women’s groups criticised the lack of action on specific gender issues (Breitenbach, 2006). In response to this criticism, a Minister’s Strategic Group on Women and a new consultative body for women’s groups, the Scottish Women’s Convention, formed in 2003 (Breitenbach, 2006). During this time period, the Equal Opportunities Commission in Scotland also strengthened its role as a strong voice for women. Thus, although comparable to the larger UK equalities landscape because of the commitment to a dual strategy promoting policy agencies and mainstreaming, Scotland developed its own independent approach through its commitment to a wider equalities framework and a more general mainstreaming strategy.

³⁷ For more information on each of these strands see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality>

The Development of the Mainstreaming Strategy in Scotland: Mainstreaming Equality

The Early Years: 1999-2003

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Scottish mainstreaming advocates campaigned for mainstreaming as the central *equality* policy in Scotland, expanding beyond gender policy (Clavero and Daly, 2002). While a general approach to equalities did eventually come about at the UK level, Scottish documents are much more explicit about the decision to place mainstreaming at the heart of the equality strategy (Clavero and Daly, 2002) and the Scottish government made this move earlier than their UK counterparts. The *2000 Equality Strategy* (Scottish Executive, 2000³⁸) lays out the principle that “mainstreaming equality means that equality issues should not be addressed as an afterthought or catered for only by specific programmes or initiatives. It means that equality considerations should be taken into account from the outset in all the work of the Executive” (Scottish Executive, 2000, section 2). There is an explicit focus on the ability of mainstreaming to change organisational culture (Scottish Executive, 2000, section 3). Appropriating mainstreaming in this way, with a more general focus on equality, rather than just gender, was a decision made in relation to seeing equality from a diversity perspective³⁹ (Mackay and Bilton, 2000; Squires, 2007a). Equality advocates who argued for an increased focus on the intersectionalities of multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage also recognized that gender mainstreaming seemed to be a policy that could be developed more generally to deal with all types of inequality.⁴⁰

The move to a more general equality strategy is borne out in the equality documents produced by the Scottish Executive and Parliament in its early years. In 1999, the Executive publication *Making it Work Together: A Programme for Government* (Scottish Executive, 1999⁴¹), the first Equality Statement given to Parliament by Wendy Alexander, MSP⁴², the

³⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/social/wtem-00.asp>

³⁹ It was also a result of the logic of the recently signed Amsterdam treaty, which articulated a framework of multiple strands of equality (Mackay and Bilton, 2000).

⁴⁰ The idea that gender mainstreaming can be applied more generally is contested (Verloo, 1999, 2006); however, recent acceptance of equality mainstreaming seems to demonstrate that these worries have been ignored or overcome.

⁴¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1999/09/3423/File-1>

first Parliamentary debate on equality⁴³, and the consultation document *Towards an Equality Strategy*⁴⁴ all worked together to commit the new Scottish government to an equality focus (at least on paper). In November 2000, after the consultation process was over, the Executive launched the *Equality Strategy* to “to tackle discrimination and disadvantage, to foster respect for the diversity of the people of Scotland, and to forge new partnerships for change” (Scottish Executive, 2000, Minister’s Foreword to the Equality Strategy). The formal dedication to placing equality at the ‘heart’ of policy making in the new Scottish government came from these various sources.

In the devolved Scottish institutions, mainstreaming equality was part of the social justice approach (Mackay, 2001) and understood to be a long term approach dependent on a number of inter-locking variables (Mackay and Bilton, 2000). The potential for mainstreaming to become a technocratic, ‘ticking boxes’ exercise was identified (Mackay and Bilton, 2000) and reports highlighted the need to make inroads to funding as a key strategy to sustain mainstreaming’s momentum (Scottish Executive, 2003, section 4). Equal opportunity advocates in Scotland understood what it would take for mainstreaming to be an effective approach. They saw the new Scotland as a space which would be open to overcoming the difficulties mainstreaming had faced in the past (Squires, 2007a). With a commitment to portions of the more transformational aspects of mainstreaming and with mechanisms in place to encourage successful mainstreaming⁴⁵, the growth of the strategy as both a goal and process seemed to be assured.

In 2001 and 2003, reports from the Equality Unit outlined the work being done in the Executive as part of the *Equality Strategy*. The 2001 *Preliminary Report on Equality* has a strong focus on consultation and community, which echoes the *Equality Strategy*’s commitment to a partnership approach (Scottish Executive, 2000, 2001a). Mainstreaming is again highlighted as both a goal and a practice and the report focuses on mainstreaming equality in budgeting and spending practices, more research, a commitment to desegregated data, and the continued evaluation of mainstreaming. This report also details, for the first

⁴² The text of this statement is included in Annex A of the Executive Consultation document *Towards an Equality Strategy* <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc16/tesr-08.asp>

⁴³ For a transcript of this debate see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-99/or031202.htm#Col1207>

⁴⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc10/taes-00.asp>

⁴⁵ See Mackay and Bilton (2000) for an analysis of what needs must be met for successful implementation.

time, the steps that the Executive as an organisation and employer will take to implement mainstreaming within itself. The *Preliminary Report* preceded the 2003 *Making Progress: Equality Annual Report* which charts progress made on the *Equality Strategy*. This report details legislative changes to improve equality and focuses on each department's efforts to work towards a more equal Scotland. Mainstreaming is again highlighted as a long term process, but with work done on data and statistics, consultation, and "developing the process" to encourage mainstreaming in policy and spending plans (Scottish Executive, 2003). The report also includes sections on diversity (within the context of the Executive as an employer) and the promotion of equal opportunities (through various campaigns), thus covering the entire spectrum of equality policy measures at work in Scotland at the time.

The *Equality Reports* clearly outline the continued efforts of the Executive to broaden the use and definition of mainstreaming to fit a conceptualisation beyond gender. However, the early years also offered a wide variety of efforts aimed at women specifically. Many of these efforts, such as advanced measures to help combat domestic violence, may fit better into the tailoring framework, although the concept of mainstreaming is generally present in these reports. There was a strong effort, spurred on by Engender, women's organizations and women academics to collect and disseminate gender specific data and research to be used as analytical tools for mainstreaming.⁴⁶ It was also during these years that the then Minister for Communities, Margaret Curran, formed the Minister's Strategic Group on Women (Breitenbach, 2006). Thus, a current of women and gender specific measures flowed alongside the broadened equality mainstreaming strategy.

While efforts were made to keep women's needs⁴⁷ from being subsumed under a general focus on equality, a simultaneous shift in language away from 'women' and towards 'gender' began to occur in Executive policy and reports. This was due in part to the expansion of the mainstreaming agenda to include other equalities groups and in part to the strategic inclusion of men into a gender framework⁴⁸. With this move towards 'gender' becoming the stand-in word for 'women', there was also a move away from language which articulates an understanding of the power and relational aspects associated with more radical

⁴⁶ See for example *Men and Women in Scotland: A Statistical Profile (2001b)* <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/mnw.pdf> and the *Social Focus on Women and Men 2002* <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/sfwm/docs/sfwm.pdf>.

⁴⁷ And the specific needs of other equality groups as well.

⁴⁸ See for example, *Gender in Scottish Higher Education: What's the Issue*, a report published in July 2006 by the Scottish Funding Council. http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/SFC_Gender_Report_July_2006.pdf

understandings of the term ‘gender.’ For example, in *A Gender Audit of Statistics: Comparing the Position of Women and Men in Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2007b), gender is reduced to sex and becomes a variable for comparing relative position. While having this statistical information is important to policy makers, the confusion of gender, women and sex reduces the complex nuances of gender in problematic ways. This articulation of gender has the effect of keeping policy and process about individual men and women and not recognising the relational and structural dynamics of gender. This shift has been traced and criticised in academic circles (Breitenbach, 2006; Bacchi and Eveline 2005; Kasic, 2004) and can be seen as part of a larger trend at the UK and international level towards a language of gender which does not incorporate feminist understandings of the word.

In the early years of devolved Scotland, we can see an asymmetric development of gender and equality policy contrasted with the UK as a whole. Mainstreaming was adopted both as a process and a goal, and moved from specific gender mainstreaming to equalities mainstreaming. Policy agencies like the Equality Unit in the Executive and the Equal Opportunities Committee in Parliament were set up to deal with equalities more generally, although specific units catered to women’s interests. Devolved Scotland seemed poised to take advantage of the lessons learned at the UK and international levels about ways to successfully incorporate equality into the core of the policy process.

2003-The Gender Equality Duty

Despite these early gains, the progress of equality policy in the Scottish Executive generally and of gender policy specifically continued in a rather patchwork manner. Unfortunately, the promise to report annually (or even periodically) on equality issues was not followed after 2003, due in part to a shift by those in the Executive to address individual strand-based issues and in part to a renewed focus on developing technocratic mainstreaming tools. Assessments and action plans of the *Race Equality Duty* dominated the remainder of 2003 and 2004.⁴⁹ 2005 brought a focus on the creation of the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Tool (EQIA) which the Equality Unit unveiled across the Executive as part of its broader equality

⁴⁹ See for example the *Race Equality Report* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/03/18990/33767>) and various departments Race Equality Action Plan Progress Reports.

mainstreaming commitment.⁵⁰ Working in conjunction with EOC Scotland, the Ministerial Group on Women and the Scottish Women's Convention, members of the Equality Unit developed and trained colleagues both within and outside the Executive on the EQIA, mainstreaming toolkits and how to develop equality action plans and schemes. A Mainstreaming Equality Project was set up within the Equality Unit with the remit of supporting staff in the Executive to achieve their mainstreaming goals. This project was initially scheduled for two years from 2005-2007, and was expected to continue indefinitely. In addition, the mainstreaming team turned to the Internet in order to reach a wider audience. A web-based research portal to help those dealing with mainstreaming responsibilities was set up in 2002 and updated in 2006 to become PRIME, the Portal to Resources and Information on Mainstreaming Equality⁵¹. The website included a mainstreaming toolkit developed by one of the Equality Unit members of staff, as well as links to other web-based resources throughout Scotland. There was evidence of work done specifically to move forward a gender equality strategy, but it was limited in its scope and hampered by institutional constraints. As McKay and Gillespie wrote in 2005, "the near exclusive emphasis on transforming the *process* in line with a mainstreaming strategy is, as yet, failing to deliver in actual *policy* initiatives" (p. 112, emphasis in original).

Overall, the Equality Unit and the Executive more generally have struggled to develop a strategic approach towards equality. Working under a general equalities remit, but working with political pressure to focus on particular equality strands makes it difficult to sustain work across the strands. Thus the mainstreaming approach has not yet coalesced into substantial changes in policy (Breitenbach, 2006). In addition, there was a pervasive feeling that relying on voluntary measures, no matter how encouraged by the Executive and the Parliament, was not going far enough (Clavero and Daly, 2002). Finally, women specific measures seemed to get lost in the general equality movement. After the 2003 *Equality Report* which mentions measures targeted specifically at women, it was not until 2006 that an explicit focus on gender can be seen again, with the publication of the *High Level Summary of Equality Statistics*⁵² (Scottish Executive, 2006a). With mainstreaming moving forward in fits and starts, it

⁵⁰ See for example the EQIA Toolkit developed by and for health boards <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/02/20687/52421>

⁵¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18507/mainstreamingequalities>

⁵² Interestingly, the *High Level Statistics* came about through internal advocacy as a way to get gender on to the agenda of new ministers. When the 2007 elections were announced, the head of the Social Justice Research branch argued that there needed to be a 'quick and dirty' fact sheet about gender that could be passed up to any new members of government. This was broadened later to include other equality strands. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/11/20102424/0> Also, this does not reflect work done by the Strategic Group on Women and EOC Scotland, only work done by and for the Executive.

appeared necessary to bolster the gender mainstreaming agenda with a legal backbone (Clavero and Daly, 2002).

The realisation that ‘soft’ mainstreaming measures were not strong enough to change the policy process or transform policy outcomes already existed in other contexts throughout the UK and its devolved governments. As early as the devolution settlements in 1998, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland incorporated legislative duties to promote equal opportunity in their founding legislations. As already discussed, the *Scotland Act 1998* encouraged Parliament to encourage equal opportunities and allows them to impose duties on public authorities to encourage equal opportunities. Similar measures can also be seen in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 includes a legal duty that requires government to proactively act by making “appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that its functions are exercised with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people” (Chaney, 2002; Clavero and Daly, 2002). The Welsh situation is close to the Scottish one, as the equality duty was driven by women’s activists and was also part of a push to elect a large proportion of women to the National Assembly (Chaney, 2003). Section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* also places a statutory duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity. While reviews of the success of this duty have been mixed (Chaney and Rees, 2004; McCrudden, 2004; Veitch, 2005) the duty did provide new resources and high level profiles that help encourage more information and knowledge about gender inequality. As in the Scottish context, the focus is on a generic equality mainstreaming process and the Equality Commission oversees, monitors and reviews equality practices across the strands. However, the commitment on the part of Northern Ireland to an equality duty was set in a very different context than in Scotland as it was driven by the need to improve community relations in the light of persistent sectarianism.

There was an acknowledgement throughout the UK that the mainstreaming agenda needed a legal basis upon which to build as a strategy to promote change. There was already a precedent set for legislation on equality issues in Wales and Northern Ireland and in the foundations built into the *Scotland Act*. There was also a recognition that single equality policy agencies were growing in legitimacy. Westminster government was moving towards a equality approach in recognition that “the continued existence of separate equality commissions in London began to look anachronistic” (Squires, 2007a, p. 521) in light of the

Equality Unit in Scotland, the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland and the Equality of Opportunity Committee in Wales. In 2001, the UK Government opened up a consultation on the possibility of merging the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Disability Rights Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality into a single commission. This was prompted in part by the moves in devolved governments as well as by EU legislation⁵³ which propelled the UK government to rethink its equality institutions (Squires, 2007a). In 2003, after the consultation process, the UK government announced the planned creation of the Commission on Equality and Human Rights to bring together work done across all the equality strands in one statutory body.

Equality advocates, especially gender equality advocates, supported the creation of a single equality body. They recognised that a single-strand approach does not deal effectively with the intersectionality of inequality and that a single body would help institutionalise effective work across areas of equality (Squires, 2009). In response to European moves towards addressing multiple forms of inequality, the move towards a single equality body was part of a larger reform strategy to deal with patchy equality legislation by streamlining and simplifying legislation and statutes into a single Act.⁵⁴

Concurrent with developments towards a general equality framework, the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*, which gave rise to the Race Equality Duty, and the *Disability Discrimination Act 2005*, which gave rise to the Disability Equality Duty, had set a precedent for specific duties to engage with individual strands. Reviews of the Race Equality Duty suggested that while sweeping change did not occur due to a duty, the legislative weight of a duty led to “an impressive checklist of equality initiatives and began to lay down robust monitoring data to guide policy and evaluate outcomes” (Williams and DeLima, 2006, p. 517). It was argued that a similar duty for gender “would more deeply embed gender in the policy process and also extend it to departments or areas of policy where the commitment is currently weak...it would also ensure the allocation of resources and expertise to the gender agenda” (Clavero and Daly, 2002, p. 429). The establishment of a gender duty would put gender on par with disability and race in terms of legislative power.

⁵³ The *Equal Treatment (Amended) Directive 2002/73/EC* and the *EC Article 13 Race and Employment Directives*. Combined these outlawed discrimination based on more strands – sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age – and the UK government did not want to establish separate commissions for each strand.

⁵⁴ The single Equality Bill was published in April 2009, and became the Equality Act 2010 in April 2010.

Against this complex institutional setting, the *Equality Act 2006* established the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and established a duty to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and to eliminate unlawful discrimination based on the grounds of gender. The Gender Equality Duty encompasses generic duties that apply to all public authorities in Britain, as well as specific duties for Scotland and Wales. For those who lobbied for the Gender Equality Duty, it was a solution to the problem that gender mainstreaming had not yet been able to overcome – the issue of enforcement. A legislative duty gives the Scottish government authority and power to both establish duties and to enforce them. As a piece of ‘hard’ legislation, it gives weight and authority to gender equality which ‘soft’ measures cannot do, thus strengthening and legitimising the mainstreaming approach. In addition, from a feminist perspective, the Duty removes the onus of responsibility from individuals to prove discrimination and requires institutions to proactively prevent discrimination from occurring. In this way, a Duty succeeds in authoritatively moving the equality landscape from an individual perspective to a structural perspective, at least on paper.

The Gender Equality Duty in Scotland

The Gender Equality Duty lays out general duties for public bodies throughout the UK. Beyond these duties, the Gender Equality Duty in Scotland specifies additional duties regarding equal pay, education authorities and Scottish Ministers than those passed for England and Wales.⁵⁵ Similarly to the Duty for England and Wales, all public authorities in Scotland must:

- identify priorities and set gender equality objectives
- plan and take action to achieve gender equality objectives
- publish a gender equality scheme, report annually, and review progress every three years
- gather information on how their work affects women and men

⁵⁵ *Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice for England and Wales* and *Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice for Scotland* can be retrieved from http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/forbusinessesandorganisation/publicauthorities/Gender_equality_duty/Pages/Genderequalitydutydocuments.aspx.

- assess the different impact of policies and practices on both sexes and use this information to inform their work
- consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders

In England and Wales, public bodies must only consider the need to have objectives which address the causes of differences in pay between men and women. In Scotland, listed public authorities with more than 150 staff have a unique duty regarding equal pay. They must:

- publish an equal pay policy statement and report on progress every three years

The general Duty requires all listed bodies to comply with the same specific duties. In Scotland, however, education authorities are singled out and required to, along with publishing their own scheme, ensure that the schools they manage gather information on the effects of their policies and practices on gender equality, assess the impact of those policies and practices on gender equality, carry out steps to meet the duty, and report on these activities.

There is also an additional duty on Scottish ministers, which is not placed on their English and Welsh equivalents. Ministers are required, from 1 July 2010, to publish reports every three years that:

- set out the priority areas that ministers have identified for the advancement of gender equality by public authorities in Scotland
- provide a summary of progress made by public authorities in these priority areas.⁵⁶

Passed in April 2007, the next steps for listed public sector bodies were to produce a Gender Equality Scheme by 29 June, 2007⁵⁷ and for listed public sector bodies with 150+ staff to produce an Equal Pay Statement by 28 September, 2007.

The Gender Equality Duty reflects the shifts occurring in the gender equality landscape both internationally and domestically. The legislative nature of the Duty marks the move towards the enforcement of the gender mainstreaming agenda, as well as a realisation that organisations need to assume the responsibility for proactively stopping discrimination, rather than placing the burden on the individual. However, as I will show in this thesis, the

⁵⁶ This duty is additional to the responsibility of the Scottish Government to produce its own gender equality scheme.

⁵⁷ Gender Equality Scheme <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/30095002/0>

implementation and institutionalisation of the Duty has proved difficult for many of the same reasons that make the wider mainstreaming strategy difficult to implement and institutionalise. The Duty requires thinking about organisations in new ways to address issues of gender equality, yet it underplays the ‘genderedness’ of political institutions. The strategies set out to implement the Duty also fail to recognise the continued burden this places on equality advocates within government. The Gender Equality Duty’s new requirements placed on public bodies mean more and new work for those responsible for ensuring compliance with the Duty. These individuals are the ones who must shape this shifting equalities landscape into the reality of everyday policy life. They must translate an amorphous and shifting policy environment into concrete action, both at the policy level and at the organisational level. They must consider how this new landscape changes (or not) their jobs, their roles, and their perceptions of themselves within the landscape. This is complex and it demands a high price from committed advocates. These, and other issues, are further explored in the following chapters.

Conclusion: The Changing Landscape of (Gender) Equality

While equal treatment, positive action and mainstreaming measures continue to be used and debated UK-wide and in Scotland, the context in which they are set has shifted since the late 1990’s and 2000’s. In 2006, the EU *2006 Recast Directive (2006/54/EC)* encouraged gender advocates to review equal opportunity and treatment in matters of employment and occupation. In 2007, the WEU transferred to the newly created Government Equalities Office. This is part of the larger move of the UK Government away from a ‘silo-approach’ towards a more unified equalities approach. It coincides with creation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission after the passing of legislation to combine the distinct equalities bodies into one. In the past decade, there has been a shift both in academic literature and in public policy circles away from a ‘separate strands’ approach to equality towards a ‘diversity’ approach (Squires, 2007a, 2007b, 2009; Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006) which attempts to think about “inclusiveness, integration and intersectionality” (Dickens, 2007). This has come about as increasing attention is paid to both the range of factors which cause marginalisation⁵⁸ and the ways in which multiple modes of discrimination play out.

⁵⁸ Motivated by the EU’s decision in Article 13 EC to acknowledge sex, racial and ethnic origin, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation as causes of discrimination.

Scotland, since devolution, approached mainstreaming from an equalities, rather than gender exclusive, perspective. This approach is now being adopted throughout the UK. A number of debates on these issues has arisen as “there is, inevitably, a division of opinion among feminists as to whether this extension of mainstreaming to embrace ‘diversity’ rather than just gender is a positive development” (Squires, 2007b, p. 165). Of key concern is the impact that incorporating a mainstreaming approach to fields other than gender will have on the gains made by specific feminist interventions. The move to policy machineries which cover all strands, effectively replacing women’s policy agencies, may have the effect of undermining feminist advances within governments. I return to this debate in my conclusions, where I further address issues of intersectionality and diversity.

Devolution provided a new space for feminists to take forward the lessons learned from other mainstreaming projects and in doing so they chose to think about the mainstreaming of all equalities, not just gender. This set the stage for a complex relationship to develop between equalities and gender in the Scottish Executive. The impetus for the Gender Equality Duty grew out of this relationship, as equalities experts and those dealing with gender issues specifically advocated for a Duty which would address gender and women’s issues specifically. Set within the context of a shifting equality landscape that is more and more concerned with diversity and intersectionality, the implementation of the GED and other gender-specific mainstreaming efforts provide a window into how people are dealing with the challenges of mainstreaming. The following chapters provide a look through that window, as I lay out my methodological and analytical framework and provide a description of mainstreaming life in the Executive.

Institutional Ethnography and Gender Mainstreaming

A critical examination of the literature suggests that there is much to learn by those interested in the process of gender mainstreaming by paying attention to the insights from work on bureaucracies and gender, work and organisations. Methods to operationalise these ideas are not as apparent. Feminist political scientists have vigorously pointed out the gendered nature of political relations with the claim that “gender relations are inevitably power relations, and are, therefore, political” (Kenny, 2007). Yet, operationalising these relations can be difficult. The shift towards seeing gender as something which is done, and new understandings of the multiple and shifting nature of gender opens up new theorising about the role of gender in politics, but it also complicates the empirical picture. Current research in feminist political science and feminist international relations explores methodological topics and argues for the use of innovative methods that go beyond conventional political science tools (Ackerly, Stern and True, 2006; Krook and Squires, 2006; Lovenduski, 1998; Mackay, 2004; Moon, 1997, 1999, 2007). There are examples of case studies (see, for example, Verloo, 2007; Woodward, 2008), interviewing (for example, Childs, 2004) and discourse analysis (for example, Hansen, 2006), which attempt to better discover and understand the ways that gender operates in politics. In this chapter, I engage with this discussion and argue that institutional ethnography supplements and enriches the methodological landscape by allowing researchers to take part in and study the everyday and lived experiences of participants. I argue that my study is an example of the use of institutional ethnography to connect everyday politics to the global context

Feminists are often interested in the experiences of individuals, of women, of those people who are often overlooked in the research of grand politics, and of the micro, everyday level of politics. Feminists also assign analytical importance to the gendered everyday experiences of people within the organisations and governmental systems. I believe that it is exactly in these areas where ethnography excels as a method. Institutional ethnography provides tools and concepts which can be used by feminist political scientists. It provides the framework to create unique insights about the interactions among individuals and organisations, sites of power, resistance and change, and the normalising processes of bureaucracies and political

institutions. I argue that ethnography can lead to more than a simple description of the culture of a place of politics; it can illuminate the constantly evolving politics of the ‘art of the state [that] give it shape, articulate its relationships and express its legitimacy’ (Galvin, Shapiro and Skowronek, 2006, p. 1).

On the one hand, because of my interest in organisations and their connections to the international system, I needed a methodology which takes seriously the importance of institutions and their connection to the global level. At the same time, I was committed to exploring experiences of individuals who make up the organisations. Since my research puzzle focused on understanding everyday experiences of gender mainstreaming in order to shed light on the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a global approach to gender equality, I required a methodology which investigated multiple levels and provided a way to explicate linkages between the micro, meso and macro levels of practices, processes and norms as well as the local and global levels of politics. I needed a local-level approach which ensured that women and their experiences, especially, were not lost in my examination of bureaucracies and state organisations. Yet, this appreciation for individual experience had to be combined with my recognition that individuals’ experiences cannot be separated from the institutional limitations which constrain agency and transformational potential, all set within a global context.

As I describe in the next few sections, I found institutional ethnography to provide key concepts and tools to help me analyse beyond the local level of experience (Campbell and Gregor, 2002; Smith, 1990, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006). The ideas of starting from the problematic, exploring relations of ruling, understanding the ways regulatory frames normalise certain processes and practices, investigating work knowledges, using mapping techniques and understanding text-work-text process, along with an explicit focus on power, proved to be excellent concepts upon which to base my research design. They provided ways to move analysis from an everyday perspective to a more global perspective. Institutional ethnography allows me to emphasise the holistic processes of gender production. It bolsters an understanding of everyday, routine and micro-level practices that shed light on broader issues important to the dynamics of global gender equality policies. As Campbell and Gregor (2002) state, for institutional ethnographers, “analytically, there are two sites of interest – the local setting where life is lived and experienced by actual people and the extra or trans-local that is outside the boundaries of one’s everyday experience” (p. 29). It also provides ways to

draw together everyday experiences with broader social realities through an explicit focus on power.

Institutional ethnography provided the tools I needed to investigate everyday practices of the Scottish Executive in order to better understand the dynamics of gender mainstreaming and to investigate why gender mainstreaming has not fulfilled its radical potential locally in the Scottish Executive, and more globally, as an approach for ensuring more gender equal outcomes in the policy process. It gave me a lens through which I could examine my experience working in the Scottish Executive, and allowed me to make sense out of the everyday practices which I observed and in which I participated. This chapter provides insight in to the institutional ethnographic methodology. I discuss the ontological basis for using the method and lay out key terms and tools. I describe what a successful institutional ethnography should look like, and explain the analysis process. The last section of the chapter refers to my specific case selection and decisions made in regards to my institutional ethnography at the Scottish Executive. Throughout the chapter, I articulate why institutional ethnography was a successful method to use when examining the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in Scotland.

Dorothy Smith: Institutional Ethnography

In my search to find a methodology that would target and expose the day-to-day world of gendered political organisations, shed light on activities at the institutional level and provide a way to analyse larger global trends in gender equality policy, I was stymied by traditional methods used in political science. I am committed to research that is qualitative, participatory and emancipatory. I wanted a method that would be participant-focused, one that would allow the greatest amount of interaction between the research process and those individuals who would be involved. The method I needed was one that would focus on the everyday lived experiences of people in an organisation, but could be theoretically informed. To fulfil these requirements, I needed to turn to some of politics' sister disciplines to find such a method. Ethnography presented itself as fitting the requirements because it allowed for a deep, meaningful interaction with everyday experiences. My adoption of institutional ethnography gave me the concepts and tools to analyse beyond the local, everyday experiences in which I participated at the Scottish Executive.

Traditional ethnographic methodologies result in a strong description, but the analysis is often hidden within the description. This characteristic partly accounts for its slow acceptance in politics as a valid method. Political scientists are often more interested in methodologies which help them explicitly and distinctly analyse the phenomenon being studied. In my own research, I wanted to provide more than a rich and thick description of how gender plays itself out in the Scottish Executive. I needed a method which allowed me a concrete analytical framework that started in descriptions of the everyday work that goes into ‘doing’ gender mainstreaming, but that would also allow me to pull themes and make general conclusions about gender mainstreaming, bureaucracies and gender equality policies. I wanted to observe the everyday practices and processes of the people who were implementing the gender mainstreaming agenda in the Executive in order to understand what was actually happening. I believed that this would shed new light on what was working and what the barriers to successful implementation might be. Setting these findings in the context of global efforts to implement gender mainstreaming within bureaucracies would also allow me to comment on why the radical potential of gender mainstreaming was not being fulfilled.

Dorothy Smith (2005) articulates her institutional ethnographic method as a way to ‘find out just how people’s doings in the everyday are articulated to and coordinated by extended social relations that are not visible from within any particular local setting and just how people are participating in those relations’ (p. 36). In other words, an institutional ethnography examines how people’s everyday practices are connected to larger social and political norms. She calls these norms ‘relations of ruling’ and argues that they consist of the networks of relationships that coordinate and organise modern societies and institutions. She argues that relations of ruling are prevalent in organisations and manifest themselves in the everyday work of individuals. They tie the work that an individual does to ‘trans-local’ norms that exist beyond the control of any one person. The point of an institutional ethnography is to help individuals in institutions see these connections and explore the impacts of the coordination of everyday work to the relations of ruling. Individuals possess their own knowledges, based on their experiences, but an institutional ethnography allows the researcher to analyse upwards and outwards and focus on how “knowing relates to power [and the] study of how one’s knowing is organised – by whom and by what” (Campbell and Gregor, 2002, p. 15). In other words, any individual’s knowledge is organised by outside forces – relations of ruling – and the job of the research is to make this organisation explicit. Relations of ruling are the central analytical concept within institutional ethnography because they provide the route by which the researcher can move from everyday experiences to social and political realities that are beyond the individual.

To understand people's work and work's coordination to relations of ruling, institutional ethnographers focus on institutional processes, those activities that organise relations in an institutional context. They look at the dynamics of experience, not just at the experience itself, in an effort to move the analysis beyond a static examination of one person's experience. In this method, whether the experience is 'true' or not is not important. The research is not about the particular person or the experience that person is describing. Rather it is about how that experience can shed light on a wider process and help connect individual's experiences to the relations of ruling that exist in the process (Smith, 2005, p. 131). As Campbell and Gregor (2002) point out, "in focusing on social relations and the institutional processes organising them, this form of analysis identifies and then illuminates the actual workings of the setting... research interest shifts to analysis of processes and practices. How participants are, or were, involved can be made clear" (p. 101). The process of examining institutional processes fills the gap between the individual experience and trans-local norms. Institutional ethnographers believe that institutional processes play an active role in framing, organising and bounding experiences. This process is referred to as 'coordinating' processes of the everyday to relations of ruling. As I have followed the process of implementing gender mainstreaming in the Executive, rather than attempted to analyse its relative success, Smith's method gives me the framework and perspective to analyse the coordinating practices and processes of my data.

Through the study of everyday practices and relations of ruling, an institutional ethnography should describe the everyday experiences that were observed and provide an analytical account of how people's everyday knowledge and work is tied to larger norms. It should provide both descriptive accounts of the work that occurs within an institution and analysis that connects these accounts of work to social and political relations of ruling. In this way an institutional ethnography "acts as a kind of radiography of everyday life, making visible its skeletal underpinnings" (Campbell and Gregor, 2002, p.97). It should highlight the institutional processes which coordinate and activate everyday experiences within larger social and political norms. Together, the description and analysis in an institutional ethnography should provide the reader with a feeling of what it is like to work in a particular organisation as well as a clear understanding of how that work is tied to a more global context.

As I discuss in the next sections, I found the ways that institutional ethnographers work with concepts of the problematic, relations of ruling, regulatory frames and power to be extremely useful for my project. In addition, work knowledges, the idea of the text-work-text process and mapping were key analytical tools which I employed to uncover relations of ruling in the Scottish Executive. Throughout my research, I also highlight the regulatory nature of power in order to examine the gender mainstreaming agenda within the dynamics of global equality policies in bureaucracies. The use of key terms and tools, and the focus on power, allows me to effectively use institutional ethnography as a feminist political scientist to explore important questions of the research – issues of power, the explication of processes, and the role of the individual within an institution.

Key Terms

The Problematic

Smith outlines a process of institutional ethnography which starts from an emancipatory, inclusionary perspective. Rather than the researcher going into a site and stating what she would like to study about that institution, Smith's institutional ethnography 'begins in the local actualities of the everyday world, with the concerns and perspectives of people located distinctively in the institutional process' (Smith, 2005, p.34). This is called the problematic, a term she appropriates from Althusser (1971). Thus, the researcher begins by identifying the everyday processes about which the people in the institution are curious. This could be 'why do we do things this way?' or 'who makes the decisions that are passed down to me?'

Institutional ethnography moves the starting point of the research to "begin in the actualities of people's lives" (Smith, 2005, p. 22) with the problematic. In doing so, it challenges authoritative ways of knowing and explores how "knowing relates to power [and the] study of how one's knowing is organised – by whom and by what" (Campbell and Gregor, 2002, p. 15). As many feminist researchers see their work as part of a change agenda, this challenge to traditional forms of knowing opens up space to legitimise women's knowledge and experience. For those interested in feminist politics, starting with a problematic allows researchers to give voice to underprivileged voices. It refocuses the locus of knowing and knowledge away from traditional sources of knowledge. It privileges those people upon whom the research is focused. This can be difficult for the researcher since it asks her to question her own privilege and power in the research process. However, doing this work can lead to new and potentially transformative results which are grounded in an activist politics.

Starting from the problematic entails listening to research participants and seeing them as active members of the research process. The research questions are formulated with participant input and in relation to their knowledges about their work. The researcher should attempt to establish a connection to the institution that does not place her as a complete outsider, coming in with her own notions of the problems that need solving. Instead the connection should allow her to be attentive to her research partners while still maintaining an objective sense of the context within which work is being done. Starting from the problematic and keeping this attitude throughout the research process allows an institutional ethnography to serve both the researcher and the research participants.

Relations of Ruling

Relations of ruling are ontologically based in a sociological understanding of feminist standpoint theory. Smith suggests that traditional sociological methods of ethnography replicate a concealed masculinity rooted in the idea of claiming some kind of formal knowledge based on objectivity. She rejects this claim, arguing instead for a methodology which begins in the bodily experience, specifically the underrepresented bodily experience of women. By locating the focus of research here, she claims that we gain a different perspective on what constitutes the social world. Moving outwards from the local experience allows the researcher to open up the ways that everyday experiences and work are embedded in relations that are not visible from within. Thus, the research begins with the experience of individuals, but the foci of the actual research are the aspects of the institutional setting which are relevant to the people's experiences. These aspects connect the individuals to the wider relations of ruling, and the research becomes a project which "proposes to realise an alternative form of knowledge of the social in which people's own knowledge of the world of their everyday practices is systematically extended to the social relations and institutional orders in which we participate" (Smith, 2005, p. 43). In other words, the research analysis starts in the everyday but is actually concerned with wider issues of power, ruling and boundaries.

The point of an institutional ethnography is to explicate the relations of ruling by tracing the ways that local experiences are connected trans-locally to global norms and discourses. Through observation and participation, the research explores how relations of ruling organise work and knowledge, often without individuals' knowledge. To build this picture, institutional ethnographers pay special attention to the ways that work coordinates to relations

of ruling and attempt to uncover ‘coordinating mechanisms’. Coordinating mechanisms are processes which connect an individual’s work to other people’s work, to institutional regulatory frames, and to relations of ruling. Often coordinating mechanisms are invisible from within the institution but a successful institutional ethnography uncovers these mechanisms. Thus, exploring experiences and how they relate to relations of ruling is an analytically important process because it illuminates “how people in one place are aligning their activities with relevancies produced elsewhere” (Devault and McCoy, 2006, p. 294). Relations of ruling can be understood as the power relations which operate beyond the realm of everyday life (Weigt, 2006).

Using the concept of relations of ruling helps researchers tease out the dynamic interactions in everyday practices and activities which are important to the social and political organisation of individuals’ lives (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). Relations of ruling are the often invisible and hidden exercises of power that shape people’s actions and their lives. For example, neo-liberal agendas often permeate the workings of non-profit organisations, coordinating the work that individuals must do in order to apply for and acquire funding. The invisible expectations of capitalism that operate trans-locally have serious implications for those people trying to fund direct service programs. Yet, these relations of ruling cannot always be seen by the individual, even if they are participating in them on an everyday basis. It takes an institutional perspective to uncover these processes and connect them to one another. Thus, institutional ethnographies “attempt to uncover, explore and describe how people’s everyday lives may be organised without their explicit awareness but still with their active involvement” (p. 43). In other words, an individual’s work is always organised and connected to relations of ruling even if that person is not aware of the way she may be interacting with them.

Implicit in this statement is that the coordination of ruling relations is an interactive process. Seeing it as an interactive process allows for the possibility that although relations of ruling bind actors, actors also have the potential for changing those relations of ruling at the local level. This notion can be utilised by feminist political scientists who are interested in the ways institutional norms and practices play out or by those researching social and political change. The questions of structure and agency, as well as interesting questions of knowledge transfer and diffusion can be explored through relations of ruling. Using the idea of relations of ruling highlights the trans-local norms that continue to coordinate work done by change agents and gender experts. Institutional ethnography provides the concept of relations of ruling as a tool

which allows researchers to explore the interactive dynamics between those working on implementing gender mainstreaming and the institutional processes which they attempt to overcome through the use of mainstreaming tools and policies.

The concept of ruling relations is central to the analysis in institutional ethnography. The role of the researcher is to tease out and explore the connections between everyday work and larger norms at work in society. Because the research starts from the problematic and maintains a focus on the everyday, these linkages are best captured through ethnographic observation and participation. Observation and participation “brings lives and work under scrutiny” (Smith, 2005, p. 35) because the researcher does not stand outside of the world she is studying. Instead, she can integrate her direct knowledge of the everyday in to the analysis. The analytical process of coordinating observed work, texts and experience to social and political realities beyond the individual allows the researcher to make conclusions about the relations of ruling which bind the local to the trans-local (p.39). Thinking about relations of ruling allows the analysis to move from observation and description to theoretical complexity.

Regulatory Frames

Institutional processes exist to help facilitate the coordination of everyday experiences to wider relations of ruling. Within the institutional ethnography framework, Smith and others specifically discuss the role of regulatory frames as institutional processes which coordinate through the use of maintaining power at the status quo. Regulatory frames are “discursive procedures that organise how something is to be interpreted” (Smith, 2005 p. 227).

Regulatory frames are significant because they facilitate the selective incorporation of everyday actualities into organisational realities. In other words, individuals select regulatory frames when they organise their work within the institutional context. They choose those frames that will best allow them to move forward in their work. However, in doing so, the actual work being done gets translated into a larger discourse that may or may not accurately reflect the everyday experience. This is a process whereby “the work of fitting the actualities of people’s lives to the institutional categories that make them actionable is done... The categories...are governed by and responsive to frames established at a more general level” (Smith, 2005, p. 199).

The use of regulatory frames within the institutional ethnography framework is similar to frame analysis done by Verloo (2007), but the importance of the institutional ethnographic

conception of regulatory frames is that they are seen as discursive procedures. They are actively used by individuals and can be observed in examinations of work procedures. Thus, they are not only the result of everyday experiences getting transformed into institutionally acceptable categories and frameworks but also the process by which everyday experiences are translated into wider discourses that fit more easily with relations of ruling. Looking for regulatory frames allows us to look for “the moment of transformation into the institutional” (Smith, 2005, p. 198).

Regulatory frames add legitimacy to work, but can also make discourses which do not fit into frames invisible. Regulatory frames exist beyond the individual, at the institutional and global level. They are often activated to add legitimacy and authority to individual work and ideas. Thus, a local-level experience can be translated into something which fits with institutional discourses and relations of ruling through the regulatory frame. In this way, personal work gets coordinated to the larger realities which are at play in the institution. Yet, this process can also render work invisible or translate it into something which does not reflect the actual lived experience of the person doing the work. The role of institutional ethnography is to uncover these invisible ties and highlight individual’s experiences, the process by which they get translated, and the final outcome of the regulatory frame. Regulatory frames are an important concept in helping institutional ethnographers analyse how and why everyday experiences get transmuted into something different at the institutional level.

Power

Smith is overtly political in her approach throughout her discussion of power and its role in institutional ethnography. While not approaching power from a specifically political context, she explains how power is implicit in upholding ruling relations and its impact on the coordination of people’s actions and experiences. She argues that power is needed in order for institutions to control people’s experiences. Power results in the individual experience being translated into institutional categories and regulatory frames (Smith, 2005, p. 199). The power that flows through the status quo allows for institutional continuity and effectively subsumes experiences that do not fit within an institutional category. She maintains that through the ethnographic study of texts, experiences, and language the researcher can get a clearer understanding of the ways power functions in the day-to-day experience to uphold institutional power regimes at a more global level.

Although Smith's own research is focused on the social organisation of the health care system, others have used her method in more overtly political studies. Harrison (2006) used institutional ethnography to explore the role of Canadian military culture in the military's response to women's abuse in military families. Through interviews with survivors of abuse, civilian and military social service providers and defence personnel, Harrison shows how the individual experiences of women are connected to the wider relations of ruling in military culture that enforce hyper-vigilance and military unit cohesion. Perreault (2003) adopted the institutional ethnographic methodology to examine political organising by indigenous groups in the Ecuadorian Amazon. He used participant research, in-depth interviews and text based research to "highlight the articulation of community residents with trans-local, multi-scalar networks, and the ways that these network relationships have served to transform [the area], as well as the livelihoods of its residents" (p. 71). These are examples of researchers who have used institutional ethnography in ways which fit more comfortably with questions often asked in political science.

Although institutional ethnographers do not tie their research directly to work being done by gender and organisation theorists, the overlap in the literatures is apparent. In *Gender and Bureaucracy* (1992), Savage and Witz argue for the recognition of how bureaucracies are both shaped by and take part in shaping the gendered configurations of bureaucracies. They contend that gender is "embedded in power relations" (p. 56). Their framework of power utilises insights from patriarchy, but also looks at more discursive, Foucaultian notions as well. They frame change in organisations against the fact that "organisations are the embodiment of different forms of patriarchal power relations" (p. 57) which constantly set the parameters for change. As I highlighted in Chapter One, this collection is part of the work being done to articulate a move from "gender and organisations" to a theory of "gendered organisations" (Acker, 1990, 1992; Martin, 2006). The focus on power and its ability to impact gendered organisations is common throughout feminist political science, yet operationalising power is difficult. Institutional ethnography suggests that mapping the processes of work and uncovering the coordination of work to relations of ruling allows researchers to better see power relations.

I argue that institutional ethnography is well suited to politics and this research project because of this explicit focus on power. The overt commitment to an understanding of power is central to being able to analyse at multiple levels and to critically examine the coordination of work to relations of ruling. Institutional ethnography allows researchers to empirically

investigate institutions in a thorough and comprehensive manner, highlighting the impacts of gendered power relationships as tangible barriers to change agendas.

Key Tools

In addition to key concepts, institutional ethnographers have also developed a selection of unique tools to aid in the research and analysis process. The use of these analytic tools allows the researcher to uncover processes not seen by those working in an institution, and then to reconnect them in ways which highlight the coordination of everyday experiences to trans-local relations. These tools include observing work knowledges and working out the relationship between work and texts through the process of mapping text-work-text processes. The results of using these tools are often descriptive narrations of how individuals get work done and the process by which they are coordinated to the work of others, to the institution and to relations of ruling. These descriptions can then be analysed to uncover hidden power structures, coordinating mechanisms and the impact of ruling relations.

Work Knowledges

In an institutional ethnography there is a mandate to observe the everyday organisation of people's doings. To do this the researcher observes what people do, where they do it, the time it takes to do it, and the conditions under which it gets done. Observation can also uncover what people mean to do, the skills involved, how people plan, think and feel when doing it, and what others do while this is going on (Smith, 2005). These observations of individuals' experiences are the core data source for an institutional ethnographer and are called "work knowledges" in the literature. "Work knowledge" refers to the knowledge that people have about how people do their work in their part in the process being studied. Observing and uncovering the knowledge that people already have about their own work allows the researcher to gain a deep perspective into the everyday actualities of an institution. By paying close attention to work knowledges, the researcher can begin to understand an institution from the perspective of those who work and know it from the inside. This allows the researcher "to learn from people's experiences regarding what they actually do, how their work is organised, and how they feel about it" (Smith, 2005, p.155). By starting with work knowledges, the researcher is able to keep the everyday perspective in focus as she moves outwards and upwards in her analysis.

Smith discusses the researcher's role in understanding the importance of work knowledges to an institution as a process of taking part in two dialogues. The first dialogue the researcher has is with the individuals in the institution when she observes and records people's everyday work. She can also participate in the first dialogue by allowing people to describe their everyday work. This is a descriptive dialogue, where the researcher is interested in finding out exactly what the work is that is being done. The second dialogue occurs when the researcher connects, links and builds upon the initial experience and description of work. This can be done when the researcher has multiple accounts of a work process, when an individual describes their connection to someone else's work, or even when the researcher is reflecting on how the everyday work is connected to the relations of ruling. This two-part process allows the ethnography to do more than simply describe observations; it allows the researcher to place work experiences into larger social relations that an individual working in the institution may not be able to see from their perspective (Smith, 2005, p. 1999). Thus, there are two aspects of work knowledge – the account of what work is being done and the coordination of that work to the work of others. Accounting for and utilising work knowledges are an essential part of data collection and analysis.

Text-Work-Text

Another key tool for an institutional ethnographer is to explore the role of texts in work. Institutional ethnographers argue for bringing a textual focus into the study of institutions because texts are not static objects with no relationship to institutional processes. Rather 'they create this essential connection between the local of our bodily being and the trans-local organisation of the ruling relations' (Smith, 2005, p. 119). They are active in and central to people's everyday work knowledges and thus carry an important role in institutional processes. Texts provide the means through which processes are standardised across people, time and place. Working with texts in an institutional ethnography occurs when the researcher understands the text-work-text process. This process uncovers how people use, operate and interact with texts in ways that are important to their everyday work. The connection between work and texts can occur either when an individual's work is dictated and bound by texts or when the work process develops a text which then organises the next bit of work to be done. Either way, texts enter, influence, coordinate and standardise people's experiences.

Following the text-work-text process can help the researcher follow the flow of work across individuals, departments and institutions, as well as allow her to uncover aspects of

coordination that would otherwise go unseen since they are contained within a textual form. Texts connect the work that one person does to another's work, and they coordinate that work to higher level institutional relations of ruling. Texts can coordinate work done in different places, at different times, and in different institutional contexts. They can become so entrenched in the work of an organisation that "texts are relied on as crystallised social relations" (Campbell and Gregor, 2002, p. 79) and are reflective of the ruling concepts, ideas and norms at work in an institution.

Yet texts do not simply exist; they are actively created by workers in an institution. Nor are texts static. They are situated in and actions of work, and they occur as part of real local practices (Turner, 2006). Not only can texts be edited and changed, they are made meaningful in complex ways that can change over time. Textual forms can be read differently by different people, in new places or in new times. Individuals make their own meanings out of the same text, and it is this process which interests institutional ethnographers because an exploration of the process by which people give meaning to texts can expose relations of ruling. An analysis of the work that is done around texts often reflects the organisation of ruling principles in an institution.

Thus the process of text-work-text places a great emphasis on the ability of texts to organise work, and on the analysis of people's orientation towards certain texts. Smith (2005) argues that "work is oriented to texts, is based on texts, and is producing texts" (p. 178). This can be seen clearly in political institutions, where policy documents are integral to shaping work plans and guiding the work that is carried out by government officials, as well as are the result and outcome of much of the work done in political institutions. Paying attention to the text-work-text process thus provides insight into how texts can activate people's everyday doings in an institution.

Institutional ethnographers map the exploration of everyday work done in organisations, the orientation of individual's work to other work being done, and the textual artefacts around which work is done. This mapping process is done in conjunction with an analysis steeped in understandings of power, the realities of everyday life, and the ontological presence of the individual as a key player in institutional life. All were important aspects of my research. In the next section, I further define these concepts and institutional ethnography's relationship to them.

Analysis in Institutional Ethnography

The researcher's job is to map out the relations that connect various lines of inquiry, always keeping in mind that the everyday work of individuals involved in the institution is constantly implicated in the processes that are the focus of the research. The idea is not for the researcher to study the individuals themselves, but rather explore the process in question from the standpoints and experiences of those involved. The focus is on the everyday occurrences that people take part in, but are not aware of. Institutional ethnography links individuals to wider processes, relations of ruling, and power relationships. Analysis helps explicate what is discovered and the end result is to 'make visible how [those involved in the process] are connected into the extended social relations of ruling' (Smith, 2005, p. 29).

Generally, ethnography entails observing a group's patterns of behaviour, customs, and ways of life. It is 'a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system' (Creswell, 1998, p. 58). The researcher is immersed in the lives of the people in the group or system, uses in-depth interviews and participant observation, and explores the meanings of behaviour, language, and interactions of those in the system or culture. These meanings are inferred by 'looking for what people do (behaviour), what they say (language), and some tension between what they really do and what they ought to do as well as what they make and use (artefacts)' (p. 59). Themes are discovered and a portrait is drawn that pulls together the entire cultural scene. As opposed to traditional ethnographies, institutional ethnographies place a stronger emphasis on starting in the realities of the individuals involved in institutional processes and producing knowledge which allows researchers to place themselves within the institutional order in which they are involved. In addition, institutional ethnographies analyse levels of organisation which are often ignored in other types of ethnographies and allow people's experiences, not people themselves, to become the object of inquiry (Smith, 2005).

The research programme then unfolds as the research continues and the researcher 'uncovers the social relations implicated in the local organisation of the everyday' (Smith, 2005, p. 35). Ethnographers rely on a variety of fieldwork methods. These allow them to both describe and analyse. One of the principal methods of data collection in ethnography is participant observation. Participant observation requires the researcher to immerse herself in the organisation, institution or culture being studied so that she might get the fullest possible

understanding of how people create and uncreate, play with and uphold everyday assumptions and practices. This becomes ‘not so much a method as a particularly intense way of living, a day-to-day experience in which you are simultaneously caught up and distant’ (Toren, 1996, p. 103). Researchers can approach participant observation by taking on a role within the environment or by simply observing without being actively involved. When acting as part of the organisation or culture, it is important to remain analytical of the experience through reflexive, conscious choice and there should be the realisation that in some ways the researcher will become co-opted into the environment (O’Reilly, 2005). Writing field notes and keeping a work diary are crucial to data collection, along with the constant reflection of how the research is impacting and impacted by the people and environment. The aim of participant observation is to ‘make the implicit explicit’ (Schwartzman, 1993, p. 53) and maintain a critical view of one’s own place in the organisation. This can prove to be a rich source of data.

Ethnographers often augment their observations with interviews and artefact collection. Interviews and focus groups can be a useful way to gain insights into how people perceive themselves, their role in the place being studied and the place itself. When done well, they allow individuals the chance to clarify issues that come up in observations and to have their voices be heard. The collection of various products of the place being studied can give great insight into the language, policies, missions, and beliefs that are normalised in an environment. Documents, policy recommendations, internal policies and procedures, webpage documents and promotional products are often enlightening sources of data. In addition, to really understand the environment of the everyday, it can be important to look at people’s working spaces, the art on the walls, or the menus in the canteen. These provide unique insights into the local world where the ethnography takes place.

While institutional ethnographers rely on these methods, they also pay special attention to language and experience as key sources of data. Language is important because ‘the distinctive forms of coordination that constitute institutions are *in* language’ (Smith, 2005, p. 94, author’s italics) and it thus has a role in the everyday processes of institutions. Through interviews, observations and interactions with texts and documents the researcher looks for how ‘activities are coordinated with others’ (Smith, 2005, p. 131) through language and stories. Experience, in Smith’s terms, is a dialogue which contains both the actual experience and the interpretation of that experience by the researcher. Experiences, as seen through work

knowledges, provide insight into processes which tie individuals to relations of ruling and thus have both descriptive and analytical importance.

Analysis in any good ethnography, including an institutional ethnography, relies on both descriptive and analytic writing. A thick description of the setting where the research takes place helps place readers in the scene and gives them “the impression that they are observing the scene described” (Hammersley, 1998, p. 21). This description often weaves together theories, hypothesis, reflections, interpretations and conclusions (Geertz, 1973; Hammersley, 1998). Analytical writing is also present in ethnography. This builds on the description and is often where the writer sets out the context of the ethnography, explains its significance and draws out the implications of the research (Hammersley, 1998). The combination of description and analysis presents an “insightful and nuanced story out of diverse events” (Prasad, 2005, p. 82) that can be read as significant for both the research at hand and in other situations. The total package should help the reader feel like he or she is part of the place where the ethnography took place as well as give the reader the feeling that he or she knows more about the place because of the analysis provided by the researcher.

In this section, I highlighted the ways that an effective analysis in institutional ethnography makes use of the key terms and tools which I discussed earlier in the chapter. In the next section, I describe my own efforts to conduct an institutional ethnography of the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive.

Researching Gender Mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive: An Institutional Ethnography of Efforts to Implement the Gender Equality Duty

The Problematic

As I discussed in the introduction and throughout Chapter Two, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Scotland is an interesting case study because it encapsulates many of the issues at stake in the wider gender mainstreaming movement. Scotland’s asymmetric development of its equalities mainstreaming strategy, which was developed incorporating the lessons learned by other mainstreaming approaches throughout the world, seemed at first

poised to be successful. Yet it still falls short as a radical change agenda. As I worked on my Student Placement, I began to wonder why this was so, and saw the need to incorporate knowledge from organisational and bureaucratic theory into understandings of literature discussing the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The *Equality Strategy* and *Gender Equality Duty* became the focal points of the research because they were clearly the texts regulating the majority of work being done by the Gender Mainstreaming Team and the Equality Impact Assessment was the biggest project the Mainstreaming Team worked on during 2006 and 2007. Paying attention to the work that was being done led me to seeing the relevance of these areas for my research.

The problematic of my research arose from the local concerns of individuals in the Executive about the process of gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming advocates and equalities experts - both researchers and policy analysts - wanted to know how to “do” gender mainstreaming. They wanted to know what worked and what did not work, what the examples of good practice were in the Executive and ways to better implement the mainstreaming strategy. As discussed earlier in the chapter, an institutional ethnography does not study the experience of particular people. Thus, I did not study the experiences of, for example, the researchers who have to provide evidence to back up an Annual Report concerning the success of the Duty in the Scottish Executive. Instead, I examined how the everyday work done by individuals working on the mainstreaming agenda influenced (and was influenced by) wider relations of ruling. I focused on work knowledges and work processes as the windows to understanding how activities of mainstreaming might be connected to larger institutional realities. Using work as a lens to see what was being done in terms of gender mainstreaming allowed me to better analyse the barriers to its successful implementation. I mapped out the primary work done by members of the Mainstreaming Team during late 2006 and early 2007 in regards to fulfilling the requirements sent out by the Gender Equality Duty (see discussion in Chapters Four, Five and Six). I re-visit the concepts of relations of ruling in Chapter 7 and in the conclusion where they are connected to overarching ideas of gender mainstreaming and the gender policy landscape.

Negotiating Access and Working

My job at the Executive was to update the Equalities Research webpage dedicated to information on mainstreaming. This was negotiated through a Student Placement. In exchange for working in the Equalities Research branch, I would be able to conduct an institutional ethnography. In line with the British Sociological Association ethics guidelines,

I fully disclosed my intentions to conduct an ethnography that entailed participant observation of my colleagues. My superior, her superior and my immediate co-workers were informed that I was both working and researching in the Executive. I agreed to protect anonymity by not using names in the writing up of the research and to share my results with members of the Equality Unit and Equality Research branch upon completion of the research. I was primarily responsible for updating the Equalities Research website relating to mainstreaming equalities, although I helped on any projects that I could. I was treated like a full member of staff throughout my time at the Executive. I was given access to people and meetings responsible for equalities mainstreaming in the both the Research and Policy branches. Also, due to the open plan nature of the offices and the close connections with other research branches I was able to interact with other social researchers outside of Equalities.

I spent a total of nine months working in the Equalities Research Branch of the Scottish Executive. I worked as both a full-time and part-time employee in the Equalities Research branch. 'A day' in the field was generally a typical work day, from 9am-5pm. This included time spent at my desk, in meetings with colleagues and doing the other formal aspects of my job, as well as informal time with colleagues during lunch, breaks and for short periods at the beginning and end of each day. I participated in Away Days, which were professional development days and weekends aimed at giving staff time away from the office to learn about new skills or issues related to their work, reflect on the work they were doing and connect socially and professionally in a more informal way. I also occasionally went out for drinks with my colleagues, so I had the chance to interact on a more informal level with them.

Data Collection and Analysis

My ethnography consisted of observation, interviews, use of archives and texts, and the investigation of work experiences. The vast majority of my research was done through participant observation, and my notes were kept in my field notebook. I paid special attention to the way work was done, the texts that regulated the everyday lives of my colleagues, and the language they used, especially around issues of gender and gender mainstreaming. Smith recognises that "the major data resource for institutional ethnographers is people's experience of their work...the institutional ethnography relies on people's own ordinary good knowledge of their doings" (Smith, 2005, p. 210). Participant observation and informal interviews helped me record work processes and better understand how my colleagues made meaning out of their everyday work. Because of the hesitancy of the staff to agree to formal interviews which may have made them speak on the record against the official policy line, I only

conducted one formal interview. This was with a woman who was on maternity leave and thus felt that she could be more open. However, generally my colleagues were very open and forthcoming in their daily discussions with me and I was able to conduct a number of informal interviews, where I took notes and made observations. These occurred in the course of working, and were often impromptu conversations between colleagues. I performed observations in my work space, at meetings I attended, during social activities such as lunch, breaks and after-work drinks, and at formal Away Days.

I attempted to maintain a focus on my own work processes and take note of when I ‘stopped being curious’ about specific practices and ideas. Through this reflexive process, I also negotiated the dual-role experience of being both a researcher and a worker (Bell and Nutt, 2002). To do this, I kept notes in different colours, one being for notes dealing with work and the other for writing down reflections and observations. Since I was on a Student Placement, I was not often responsible for actively engaging in and participating in many meetings or situations (although this changed the longer that I was at the Executive) and could usually keep the two activities separate with ease. On the occasions when I was called upon to be a worker first and a researcher second, I wrote up notes immediately after the situation to remind myself of the ethnographic value of the occurrence.

I also collected artefacts, although most of the physical objects we worked with were papers, reports and articles. Smith (2005) argues that these types of texts are central to institutional ethnography and give us a different perspective from which to understand work knowledges. I collected internal documents relating to the mainstreaming team, meeting minutes and agendas, handouts from conferences and Away Days, drafts of publications and the final publications themselves, internal memos, and recruitment material. I also kept emails and refer to them as evidence. I would have liked to have taken pictures of the environment as well; however, this idea was not accepted by the Executive for security reasons. However, I did take note of the physical environment where we worked, as this provided insight into the messages that the Executive attempted to send to its members of staff and is a projection of how the Executive would like to be seen by those within the organisation, as well as those from out with the organisation.

Data analysis occurred throughout the data collection process and is evident in my field notes, where I began to draw themes from the pilot study and used my readings to contextualise my notes. Further analysis occurred after I left the Executive and continued in an iterative

manner throughout the writing up process. The initial themes that I drew have been reinterpreted multiple times as I worked with further findings from the remaining time of the ethnography. The themes are described and interpreted in Chapters Four, Five, and Six which focus on the experiences of work and how these relate to the implementation of gender mainstreaming at the Scottish Executive. Chapter Seven returns to the idea of relations of ruling and coordinating mechanisms to provide an analysis which places the data within the wider context of bureaucracies and the global gender equality policy landscape. In the thematic chapters, the italicised segments which start each section are ethnographic stories constructed out of my experiences and, therefore, are not referenced directly. All other primary data is referenced parenthetically and provides the setting, the type of notes, and the date.

Limitations

My experience at the Scottish Executive occurred during a Labour-run government, and ended right before SNP became the leading party in Scotland. Normally, I would have gone back for follow up interviews, but I decided to limit the research to the time before SNP since, as Civil Servants, people were bound to advancing the current Government's agenda. In addition, due the large staff turnover in branches and departments of the Executive, none of the people with whom I worked closely were in the same positions when I finished my analysis and writing process. In fact, the majority of the women I worked with (and who make up the majority of those who work in equalities) had gone on maternity leave and had either not returned to the Executive or moved to new positions that did not focus on equalities specifically. Thus, doing the follow up that is often recommended for this type of research to ensure that participants are included in the process was difficult.

This project was limited by the fact that although I worked in the Equalities Research Branch, much of the work I was interested in studying and observing took place in the Equality Unit. Many of my findings are pulled from experiences with members of the Equality Unit since I could not have stayed in the research branch and answered the questions around which this thesis revolves. I was not physically located in the Equality Unit, reducing my ability to observe and participate as fully in the life of the policy unit as I was able to do in the Research Team. A future research project which follows this methodology should consider the exact placement of observation and work to ensure that there is a more direct connection. This will help in the analysis process.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered a significant aspect of my research – the research methodology and framework. I have always thought of my thesis as a contribution to methodological discussions in feminism and political science. I am very interested in the use of qualitative methods within the discipline and want this work to stand as a testimony to the benefits of using more interpretive methods as a way to better understand how politics and people's everyday experiences are bound up together. Thus, I found that my methodological research interests proved to be one of the key anchors upon which I built my research. Institutional ethnography provided many of the theoretical, methodological and analytical frameworks for the thesis. In using these particular methods, I aim to add to the discussion on new methods in feminist political science research by suggesting that ethnography generally and institutional ethnography specifically can be very useful to those interested in studying the everyday world of politics.

I hope that the careful consideration of both the pros and cons of my methods considered in this chapter situate the methodological decisions I made throughout my research process. I have shown that I have attempted to stay true to the reflexive nature of this type of research, and that I have been conscious of the ways I impacted the project. I recognise that my position as a feminist researcher gives me a certain worldview from which I operate, but I consider that a benefit which allowed me to maintain a decidedly political point of view throughout the process. Finding a way to think about, organise, do and analyse my material in a way which helped women was always at the core of this project. Knowing this and being upfront about any bias which I may show throughout the research, however, allowed me to keep the integrity of the research whole.

While there is still debate over what constitutes “good” qualitative research (Creswell, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Hammersley, 1992; Patton, 2002) qualitative researchers are moving towards a shared set of norms and criterion for excellence based in post-positivist, participatory aims and goals for projects. Patton (2002) suggests that while we are moving towards a shared understanding of new criteria, in the meantime, the plurality of new concepts means that we can now “carefully select *descriptive* methodological language that best describes your own inquiry processes and procedures...describe them and what you bring to them and how you've reflected on them, and then let the reader be persuaded...” (p. 576,

authors' italics). Taking this advice, I have reflected on various criterion for excellence and selected six as ones by which I have attempted to judge my own work. Trustworthiness and authenticity, sampling, saturation, reflexivity and triangulation are gleaned from literature on general qualitative research, and I add thick and rich description from work on ethnography specifically⁵⁹. I have reflexively used these criteria throughout my research process in order to gauge the methodological success of my own work.

Institutional ethnography provides new insights into the ways the people's lives impact the implementation of guided change agendas. Other methods would not have given me access to the everyday level where so many interesting tensions played out, nor allowed me to make the linkages between levels of analysis. The specific focus on work which is unique to institutional ethnography allowed me to concentrate the research on the process of implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming while also highlighting important contributions from the gender, work and organisation literature.

In the next few chapters, I continue to make the case for my methodological choices as I present my data and move into my analysis. First, I provide a description of work done by the people I worked with in the Scottish Executive, paying close attention to the work done and not done on gender mainstreaming. Following that, Chapters Five and Six present my data organised around themes of actors and practices. I discuss my findings about the connections between everyday work experiences and knowledges, gender and the politics of gender mainstreaming. Within the next chapters, I expand my institutional ethnography to include discussions of many of the core concepts of the method.

⁵⁹ See Appendix A for further elaboration of these criteria for excellence and my reflexive assessment of them in the thesis.

Work and Gender Mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive

In previous Chapters, I discussed the literature on gender mainstreaming and gendered bureaucracies, focusing on the tensions seen by others who have studied the concept and pointing out some of the inherent issues that gender mainstreaming advocates encounter during the process of implementation. I paid special attention to the way that the policy has been conceived and implemented in the Scottish context. I pointed to spaces which both open up and close down the potential of gender mainstreaming to maintain its radical feminist nature. I also set out my methodological decisions. In the following Chapters, I move away from the theoretical understandings of gender mainstreaming and explore the specific case of how gender mainstreaming was done in the Scottish Executive during a nine-month span in 2006-2007. This was a particularly interesting time as the gender equality landscape was shifting to accommodate the passage of the *Equality Act 2006* which called for the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty. Working on a Student Placement in the Scottish Executive for the Equalities Research Branch provided me with access to observe and research the processes of implementation and institutionalisation through an investigation of the work being done by the people who took an active part in mainstreaming activities.

As discussed in Chapter Three, a successful institutional ethnography starts from the perspective of the individual and describes the everyday work that is done within institutions. As a central focus of an institutional ethnography, understanding work allows for the later analysis of ways that relations of ruling are connected through and to work. This Chapter provides a thick description of work done by gender mainstreaming experts and advocates in the Scottish Executive. It is based on data gathered in a number of different ways and provides the groundwork for analysis found in subsequent Chapters. To set the context for work, I first lay out the organisational context, missions, and remits of various groups involved in the mainstreaming agenda. The second section of this Chapter is organised around the work knowledges and text-work-text processes that occurred as gender equality experts attempted to implement gender mainstreaming during 2006 and 2007. The third section of the Chapter describes other types of work done by equalities experts. This section

is important because it exposes the working reality that gender mainstreaming experts in the Executive did not do work related to gender mainstreaming all the time. In fact, much of their working life was completely unrelated to what might be seen as their fundamental job description. Taken together, these sections provide a base for further analysis in Chapters Five and Six.

Context, Missions and Remits

The Organisation

During my time at the Executive, and until the May elections of 2007, the Scottish Executive was a collection of nine departments⁶⁰: the Office of the Permanent Secretary, the Development Department, the Education Department, the Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department, the Environment and Rural Affairs Department, the Finance and Central Services Department, the Health Department, the Justice Department and Legal and Parliamentary Services. The Equality Unit and the Equalities Research Branch were located in the Development Department, which supported the Minister and Deputy Minister for Communities in delivering their portfolio goals. The Development Department was organised into four Groups, covering Housing and Regeneration, Social Justice, Planning, and the Scottish Executive Inquiry Reporters' Unit. The Social Justice Group coordinated Executive policy on Closing the Opportunity Gap, poverty, financial inclusion, equality, the voluntary sector and the social economy and the regulation of Scottish charities. The Equality Unit was part of this Group.

In addition, the Development Department's Analytical Services Division (ASD) provided economic, statistical and social research analysis for the Department. The ASD was further divided into six Branches, one of which was the Social Justice (Equalities) Research Branch. The Equalities Research Branch provided general social research analysis for Departmental goals, and worked in close conjunction with the Equalities Unit to provide evidence for the Unit's specific policies and projects.

⁶⁰ In 2007 the separate Departments were abolished and the work is now carried out by a number of Directorates, each headed by a Director. The Permanent Secretary and Directors-General (formerly the Department heads) now form a Strategic Board to oversee the achievement of strategic objectives.

Units, Branches and Teams were comprised of people at various levels within the Civil Service grading scheme. In the Executive, grades were split into bands which determined pay and responsibility levels. Generally, when people spoke of their job descriptions they spoke in relation to bands. Thus, those in the A-bands fulfilled administrative assistant roles. B-band jobs were Executive Officers and High/Senior Executive Officers who had more complex and supportive roles. B-1 jobs were often Office Managers and junior executive support posts, personal assistants and specialist Team members. B-2 and B-3 jobs dealt with management, implementation and advising tasks. These were policy officers, researchers, statisticians, and others. C-level positions were heads of units or Teams and took a leading role in the successful operation of the unit. After C-level positions, people move into Senior Civil Service (SCS) roles where they are responsible for more systematic and organisational oversights.⁶¹

Table 4.1: Civil Service Band Levels and Job Descriptions

Band Level	Job Description
A-band	Administrative Assistant
B-1 band	Office Manager junior executive support, personal assistant, Specialist Team member
B-2 band	Policy officer, researcher, statistician
B-3 band	Senior policy officer, researcher, statistician
C-band	Head of Unit, Head of Branch, Principle Researcher
Senior Civil Service	Director, Head of Department, Head of Agency

The Equality Unit

The Equality Unit was set up in 1999 as part of the post-devolution Scottish Executive to develop and support work on equality issues both internally within the Executive and externally through policies and programmes aimed at the Scottish public. There are Branches

⁶¹ Taken from ‘Guidance on Civil Service Grades’ available from www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk/.../Interchange%20Grades%20Guidance/Guidance%20on%20Civil%20Service%20Grades.doc

within the Equality Unit to deal specifically with the six strands of equality set out by the European Union – gender, race, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and age. In addition, the Equality Unit attends to asylum seekers, refugees and gypsies/travellers. The Equality Unit is specifically charged with working on gender policies and overseeing the overall equalities mainstreaming agenda.

The *Equality Strategy: Working Together for Equality*⁶² sets out the delivery arrangements for the *Strategy* within the Executive. The Equality Unit coordinates the delivery and implementation of the *Strategy*, while working with other departments and partners in other public bodies and the community. Thus their remit is “to work across government on equality issues, and...initiate, develop and fund projects, but is not itself responsible for policy implementation in areas of significant expenditure such as education, health, economic development, etc.” (Breitenbach, 2004, p. 3). The *Strategy* sets out an expectation that taking responsibility for equalities should be shared across the Executive, that leadership should come from ministers and senior leadership, and that accountability should be a yearly process, although arguably the Equality Unit is responsible for much of the work done regarding equalities, leadership has lacked consistency, and yearly progress reports have not been requested and thus not completed. However, the *Strategy* remains the guiding document for current efforts to move the equality agenda forward.

The Equalities Research Branch

The *Equality Strategy* does little to outline the role of the Equalities Research Branch beyond vague references to monitoring and evaluation (Scottish Executive, 2000, Section 5). However, by 2002, there was recognition that a dedicated Equalities Research Branch was needed to help move the mainstreaming agenda forward. Thus in April 2002, the Research Branch was created as part of the Development Department. Their official remit is “to develop a research evidence base to support the Equality Strategy and to promote the mainstreaming of research across Social Research in the Scottish Executive” (Scottish Executive, 2003, Section 4). As part of their remit, members of the Research Branch helped other social researchers develop processes to ensure that equality is considered in research design, data collection and data analysis. As part of the Analytical Services Division for the

⁶² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/social/wtem-00.asp>

Development Department, the main focus of the Equalities Research Branch was to provide an evidence base to further the equalities and gender mainstreaming remit of the Executive.

The social researchers in the Equalities Research Branch were responsible for research on all of the equality strands and generally had a background in equalities research. Members of the Equalities Research Branch were responsible for overseeing research that dealt with any of the equality strands, as well as research that was important to the social justice focus of the Department. They defined themselves more closely with “project managers” than researchers (informal conversation, field notes, 6 Feb 2007), but thought that their job was to provide the evidence needed for evidence-based policy making. More informally, this was described as doing “background, developmental work ... to feed in to the policy bit” (personal interview, 20 Jan. 2007). The number of people who worked for the Equalities Research Branch was in constant flux. When I arrived in the summer of 2006, there was one social researcher at a B-3 level (a Senior Researcher) and the Head of the Branch and Principal Researcher who was a C-1. While I was there, the Branch acquired another researcher at the B-2 level and lobbied for a B-2 statistician. When the C-1 went on maternity leave, she was replaced by a part-time C-1 and the C-2 who was the Senior Principal Researcher responsible for both Social Justice Research Branches (Equalities and Social Inclusion and Voluntary Issues) took over the remaining aspects of the job. At various times throughout its history, the Equalities Research Branch has had as many as six people and as few as one.

As the mainstreaming agenda developed within the Executive there was a more conscious inclusion of research into the framework. This was the result of concerted lobbying by members of the Equalities Research Branch to ensure that mainstreaming retains a strong connection to evidence. Thus, in the *Gender Equality Scheme*, an entire section is devoted to “gathering information and making use of information” (Scottish Executive, 2007c, Chapter 9). The section recognises that all departments have an Analytical Services Division, which can “develop and resource a relevant and focused evidence base” (Chapter 9) to help departments reach their equality goals. This implies that although the Equalities Research Branch would continue to provide evidence and research to the Equality Unit, other ASDs should also assume an equalities focus in all of their evidence gathering activities.

Gender Mainstreaming Team

The Gender Mainstreaming Team was based in the Equality Unit, but had members from both policy and research areas. There was one C-1 from the Equality Unit who served as head of the Team and was the point person for all general gender-related policies. She worked with a B-1 who provided tech and administrative support. The Mainstreaming Team was comprised of two B-band policy officers who were hired for a fixed amount of time to oversee the mainstreaming agenda and one B-band researcher from Equality Research. The Gender Mainstreaming Team was thus situated to take advantage of knowledge and expertise from both the policy and the research areas, thus making it a project firmly based in evidence but with a policy outcome focus. Born out of research commissioned by the Executive on mainstreaming which suggested that having people dedicated to the mainstreaming agenda would help its success (Mackay and Bilton, 2000), the Gender Mainstreaming Team was formed in 2005 as a two year project designed to come up with and implement an agenda of mainstreaming for the Executive. The Mainstreaming Team met regularly to update each other on progress being made. Members of the Team articulated their remit in regards to mainstreaming as “trying to understand the best, logical framework for taking forward mainstreaming. What would work, effectively...about the stages, what should happen when in terms of mainstreaming. And it was informed by evidence...about how it would work or how it could work” (personal interview, 20 Jan. 2007).

The Gender Mainstreaming Team was responsible for the majority of the agenda-setting of the mainstreaming strategy. They were the mainstreaming champions in the Executive, and others relied on them to ‘do’ mainstreaming. They did not have a formal mission or work plan, instead relying on their own internal Action Plans and their personal and professional expertise, connections and networks. They identified colleagues who were informally open to their agenda, while operating as the formal champions of mainstreaming. The Mainstreaming Team thus used its network in both formal and informal ways. For example, I obtained my Placement on the Research Team because members of the Team had strong links with feminist academics. More formally, the Mainstreaming Team rallied their colleagues to establish the ASD working group on equalities research by contacting them via email, asking them to join and asking them to volunteer names of other people who would be interested in equalities. In both formal and informal ways, the network of equalities advocates could be mobilised to help the Mainstreaming Team, but the constant work of championing mainstreaming through a conscious and deliberate plan fell to the Team only.

The Work of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming

The following sections describe the day-to-day work of gender experts and mainstreaming advocates working in the Equality Unit, the Equalities Research Branch and the Gender Mainstreaming Team. Organised around the institutional ethnography principles of work knowledges and text-work-text, they uncover the work that was done in regards to gender mainstreaming. I spend time describing the general work knowledges of mainstreaming actors about their job, networking and people. I then examine specific work knowledges actors had about developing and implementing the Equality Impact Assessment. I build on the descriptions of work knowledges by describing two work-text-work processes; one is associated with the Action Plan, the other examines the Gender Equality Duty in detail.

As outlined in Table Two, the Mainstreaming Team was a part of the evolving institutional gender and equality landscape during 2006 and 2007. Working in conjunction with their colleagues and as part of the institutional framework set up in reference to the *Equality Strategy*, members of the Mainstreaming Team were involved in the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming trainings, the Equality Impact Assessment, inter-departmental working groups, and guidance on Equality Schemes. While many of these activities were part of an Action Plan set out by the Team in 2005, others were in direct reference to the passage of the *Equality Act* and the *Gender Equality Duty*. Legal, political, and ministerial demands all were part of the work that was done during his time,. This led to a complicated setting in which the work of doing mainstreaming was carried out.

Table 4.2: Timeline: July 2006 – March 2007

Date	Internal Events	Policy Events
July 2006	-Programme of briefing staff on the EQIA and upcoming GED begins	
August 2006	-Begin work on updating PRIME	
Sept 2006		
Oct 2006	- Start of ASD Working Group on Equalities	
Nov 2006	-PRIME goes live	-High Level Summary of Equality Statistics: Key Trends for Scotland 2006 (Scottish Exec publication)
Dec 2006		-Disability Equality Scheme published
Jan 2007		
Feb 2007	-New Senior Principal Researcher arrives, forceful commitment to gender and equalities	-Equality Bill before Parliament -Debate on State of Equalities in Scotland
March 2007	-Discussions start about how to restart the mainstreaming agenda	-Equality Schemes published -A Gender Audit of Statistics: Comparing the Position of Women and Men in Scotland (Scottish Exec publication)

Work Knowledges of Gender Mainstreaming

Institutional ethnography teaches us to be aware of work – the daily activities done by members of an institution to get things accomplished. Work knowledge is the specific knowledge that individuals possess about their job-related activities. Understanding these knowledges gives us insight into the daily practices of individuals in institutions and allows us to trace these practices to larger relations of ruling. To perform this analysis, however, it is first important to understand the work knowledges of the particular people who are involved in the research. To this end, this section describes work knowledges of individuals associated with the Equality Unit, the Equalities Research Branch and the Gender Mainstreaming Team. I describe both general work knowledges used when mainstreaming experts were working towards fulfilling the Gender Equality Duty and specific work knowledges associated with the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) since this was a central task of the Mainstreaming Team during 2006 and 2007.

Mainstreaming experts exhibited three types of general work knowledges. These include knowledge of their mission, job and remits, knowledge of both formal and informal networking techniques, and the institutionally-specific knowledge of working with others in the Executive. These work knowledges were essential for any one committed to moving forward the gender change agenda in the Executive.

Mission, Job and Remit

Members of the Research team and Policy Officers had work knowledge about their mission, job and remit. Since the Equalities Researchers were made up of only social researchers during the time I was there, the research that they worked on was all based in the social sciences, as opposed to statistical or economic analysis. All but one of the members of the Team had background experience in equalities-related topics that they gained previous to their employment in the Executive and they were knowledgeable about researching equalities. Yet the name ‘social researcher’ was a misnomer. The work that the researchers did was, in fact, closer to a project manager. Almost all of the research was actually conducted and written up by contracted researchers outside of the Executive. Thus, the researchers were responsible for working in conjunction with the contracted researchers to move the research through the system. While the social researcher at the Executive would become competent in the research topic, it was not expected that she was the expert. Her role was not to ensure that the content of the research was correct, but rather to make sure that procedures were followed correctly. This meant making sure that the research was done ethically and followed the methodology set out in the proposal, as well as working with the contractor to ensure that the research was reported in ways which fit with the Executive systems.⁶³ Working to get the substantial effort done was a process of negotiating the systems on the behalf of the contractor in order to get the research approved and published in a timely manner.

Policy officers knew that they were responsible to Ministers and the Parliament. Thus, their work knowledge revealed an intimate familiarity with procedures, times and deadlines more geared towards external pressures. They understood their role in terms of outcomes and final products deemed acceptable to the Minister. They were much more in touch with the political nuances of what occurred in Parliament and the media since they felt the impact of these more strongly than their research colleagues. Policy officers saw themselves connected to the

⁶³ I discuss this further in Chapters Five and Six.

legislative life of the Executive and worked in accordance with mandates set out in policies and legislation. For those on the Gender Mainstreaming Team, the work of gender mainstreaming was somewhat different than the more standard procedures of doing research or policy. It was a project that was done jointly to ensure internal compliance with the mainstreaming agenda, but it also had external implications. Mainstreaming Team members spent more time thinking through the process as they strategised about ways to help gender mainstreaming succeed.

Networking

Networking with other equalities experts and champions throughout the Executive was an important way of gaining work knowledge. This was done both formally and informally, though a variety of methods. Formally, both researchers and policy officers scheduled meetings with other equalities experts to explore how a policy change or research topic might be perceived in other areas of the Executive. They also participated in formal networks with other equalities champions to move the mainstreaming agenda forward.⁶⁴ For instance, a Working Group on Equalities was formed with the purpose of thinking through the process of gathering useful equalities-based research. The group was comprised almost entirely of people who already worked on equalities issues, who had a background in equalities issues, or who had already been singled out as being favourable to equalities topics. The strength of the group was that it was formed from Departments and Divisions across the Executive, thus ensuring that mainstreaming was being discussed and thought of in a cross-cutting manner. It was also important to my colleagues who formed the group that it incorporate members from the Central Services division which covered internal affairs such as Human Resources and Financing, since these people could influence many of the internal policies, procedures and practices which needed to be viewed through gendered and mainstreaming lenses. The members of this group understood that a formal network added legitimacy to the work they were doing as equalities change agents.

Another formal mechanism by which equalities champions stayed abreast of developments in the field of equalities generally was by participating in conferences and training, and by spending time reading reports, documents and articles on relevant subjects. This was especially true for the Equalities Researchers. The Executive as an organisation was generous

⁶⁴ For more information on this, see Chapter Five where I discuss the role of equalities champions in further detail.

in its funding for researchers to attend training and developmental conferences where they could learn about internal procedures, topical developments in their subject areas, and policy related concerns. Participation in such events was supported financially through divisional allocation of resources and personally by senior managers. They also attended conferences and seminars on research specific topics to provide them with the requisite background knowledge to be competent in the editing and re-writing of research reports when they came back from contractors. Researchers also spent time familiarising themselves with new research topics and staying current on literature by being allowed time and space to read about new developments. Researchers were allowed to work at home if they needed to in order to read, or they could take advantage of alternative quiet spaces in the Executive- away from their desks and the distractions of email, phone and colleagues.

In contrast, members of the Equality Unit did not perceive that they had the ‘freedom’ to spend as much time on this type of development activity. They felt much more tied to Ministerial and policy cycles which required a busier and less reflective pace of work life.⁶⁵ Their role often differentiated from that of the Research Team in that members of the Equality Unit were policy officers and their mission was much less about providing an evidence base for successful policy and more about the successful implementation of policy agendas and programmes. Thus, their substantive work was done in accordance with Ministerial demands and involved more contact with colleagues at the Parliament. However, their work was carried out in many of the same ways, with a reliance on both formal and informal meetings and networking opportunities and a focus on development and training.

For both Researchers and Policy Officers, informal networking and knowledge building opportunities also occurred. For example, before and after meetings, trainings or conferences people would “catch-up”⁶⁶ about their work and trade stories about their teams, branches, units and/or departments. These informal measures allowed staff in the Research Branch to keep abreast of situations outside their normal working area. There was an expectation that new information would be shared with members of the Equality Unit, although often there was overlap where members from both Teams would attend the same events. Other times, members of the Research Branch would hear about events and information from their

⁶⁵ I explore the implications of ministers and policy cycles in Chapter Six.

⁶⁶ This is a very specific term used by staff in the Executive. Its usage and implications are discussed further in Chapter Five.

colleagues in the Equality Unit.⁶⁷ Thus, members in both the Equality Unit and the Equalities Research Branch relied on each other and other equalities champions throughout the Executive to keep updated on what was happening with diversity, equality and mainstreaming.

People

Lastly, equalities experts had a work knowledge that surrounded the people with whom they worked. They knew how to adjust to the constant rotation of staff⁶⁸. For example, in 2006, when the Principal Researcher went on maternity leave the research branch was left without a Head of Branch for much of the last of 2006. Her replacement had returned from maternity leave and worked part-time. The researchers in the Branch had to go through an adjustment period as everyone learned to work with a completely new Principal Researcher who worked in a very different style, and who did not have an equalities background. Instead, she was a traditional career Civil Servant who, although interested in the post and willing to learn about it, was more comfortable with the bureaucratic work that the post entailed rather than the content. To support the new Head, the Branch was also supervised by the new Senior Principal Researcher, a female who replaced her male colleague when he retired at the end of 2006. Contrasting to the new Head of Branch, the Senior Principal Researcher was knowledgeable about equalities issues and had a long history in the civil service working in one of its adjoining agencies. As the Senior Principal Researcher, she provided new vision and energy for the Branch and would be responsible for moving forward the mainstreaming and equalities agenda.⁶⁹ The Researchers were forced during this time to re-learn their best approaches to working with their supervisors. For instance, the new Principal Researcher preferred finalised paper copies of all documents, whereas the former Principal wanted to talk through documents as they progressed. Understanding new people on the team and strategising ways to ensure that the mainstreaming and equalities agendas moved forward took time, patience and ease with trial and error.

⁶⁷ The dynamics of the exchange of information played directly into hierarchies within the organisation, as further explored in Chapter Six.

⁶⁸ 'Staff churn' is further discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

⁶⁹ This is another example of a dedicated equalities champion, which again flags up the concerns regarding whether or not mainstreaming can be successful if its movement still resides in the power of a committed few. For further discussions of this, see Chapter Five and refer to the discussion of the paradox of implementation and its implications for equalities champions in Chapter Seven.

The work knowledges of mainstreaming advocates and equalities experts reveal an intimate understanding of the ways the Executive worked and a specialised knowledge of how to deal with the organisation in ways which would allow them to be successful. Both researchers and policy officers had knowledge of the work that went into their missions and remits, worked hard to maintain networks, and were “savvy” in the ways in which people from various backgrounds could be accommodated. All of these types of work knowledges played out in their gender mainstreaming work. In addition, as the Gender Mainstreaming Team and other mainstreaming advocates spent more and more time on the task of developing and implementing the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), they garnered specific work knowledges related to that task. These are described in the following section.

EQIA Specific Work Knowledge

Developing and implementing a new impact assessment tool was a central task done by mainstreaming experts throughout 2006 and 2007. The call for a tool which would help all staff members include equality thinking in to their work came from the Equality Strategy, and was first attempted with the Race Equality Scheme. Later, the EQIA became a tool for mainstreaming all equality strands throughout the Executive. It is a mechanism for the thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, to be used at the time of

reviewing an existing policy, changing an existing policy or developing a new policy. The function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of differential and/or adverse impact upon the relevant groups. The process also enables those using it to identify remedies and measures that might be taken to advance equality. EQIA is about building in equality considerations from the very beginning of the policy making process and provides the tools and processes for mainstreaming equality effectively (Scottish Executive, 2007c, Sec. 5.1).

The development and implementation of the EQIA was designed as an instrument by the Equality Unit to help facilitate the *Gender Equality Duty* specifically and equalities mainstreaming generally. The EQIA was developed as a 10-step tool which individuals could use to check if newly developed policies and procedures – both internal to the Executive and for external use as well – contained an equality perspective.⁷⁰ This was considered an essential aspect of the mainstreaming toolbox, and the fact that it was being mainstreamed across the entire Executive, was seen as being intrinsically tied to the successful

⁷⁰ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18507/EQIAtool>

implementation of the *Gender Equality Duty* (Scottish Executive, 2007c, sec. 9.10). The early versions of the EQIA Tool and Guidance were developed in 2005, and continued to be updated through 2007. The updated EQIA covered all six of the equality strands in the Executive and was used in conjunction with the creation of all new policies and practices. I found evidence of three specific work knowledges that members of the Gender Mainstreaming Team used in conjunction with working on the EQIA. These are framing, strategising and reflecting.

Framing

In 2006 and 2007, while I was at the Executive, members of the Equality Unit and the Equalities Research Branch, especially those on the Mainstreaming Team, concentrated on updating guidance, providing training on EQIA throughout the Executive and getting the tool online to the staff intranet so that a database could be developed which would allow anyone to search assessments.⁷¹ Because language is so important to the bureaucracy of the Civil Service (field note reflections, 6 Aug 2006), it was decided that promoting and implementing the EQIA could be better achieved by explicitly tying the EQIA to the larger discussion of gender mainstreaming. In meetings with the Mainstreaming Team, there was a consistent thread of conversation revolving around framing the EQIA as a ‘tool’ to help other members of the Executive comply with the GED (branch meeting, field notes, 27 Sept 2006; branch meeting on setting up an ASD working group on Equalities, field notes, 7 Sept 2006). Members of the Mainstreaming Team decided to only speak of the EQIA as a ‘tool,’ it was introduced in PowerPoints and presentations as the best way for other staff members to comply with the *Gender Equality Duty*, and it became the best known aspect of the mainstreaming strategy.

This framing decision was not uncontested by others working on equalities mainstreaming. As developing, promoting and implementing the EQIA became the focus of work for the Mainstreaming Team, it moved from being understood as a tool of mainstreaming to becoming the main goal of the mainstreaming agenda in the Executive. This left other mainstreaming and equalities champions who were not on the Team, and thus directly involved with the development of EQIA, feeling like EQIA became too much of a focus. The worry was that the focus on a tool of mainstreaming would override larger discussions about

⁷¹ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18507/EQIASearch> for the general EQIA search. See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18934/RList> for the specific database related to Race Equality. Similar databases were to be developed in relation to disability and gender.

the aims and goals of a strategy of mainstreaming. The negotiations between equalities champions that occurred during conversations and meetings about the best way to frame EQIA were hidden from the rest of the Executive because exposing that work would only subvert the overall mission of promoting gender mainstreaming. Yet, these framing conversations highlighted instances of individuals mobilising their own work knowledge as they fought to push forward the version of EQIA they thought was best.

EQIA, in addition to being framed as a tool to help the Executive comply with the GED was also promoted as integral to providing research-based policy. Colleagues in the Research branch were participating in an institutional-wide discussion about the importance and role of assessment in the work of government. The social researchers I worked with were committed to the idea of research-based governance and wanted to assess the impact of policies on equality groups. This was a change from the way that things had been done in the Executive, where the focus had largely been on the ways that community members could impact policy before it was made. As my boss said, “we have been very input focused, not output focused at all” (staff meeting, field notes, 21 Nov. 2006). Promoting EQIA was tied to changing the culture about assessment. The idea was that it was important to see ‘distance travelled’ by a policy and not just to equality proof it at the beginning stages of policy development. The head of the Mainstreaming Team at a public conference for community stakeholders talked of the EQIA as useful in gathering evidence for policy making (Complying with the Gender Duty Conference, field notes, 22 Jan 2007). The decision to frame the EQIA through this lens was less complicated, as it was easy to fit EQIA into a discussion that was already occurring throughout the Executive. The already established support for research-based policy was harnessed by mainstreaming advocates and used to push their own agenda.

Strategising

Although there was discussion about whether or not EQIA was only to be framed as an assessment and evaluation tool, the Mainstreaming Team finally decided to firmly locate EQIA within the policy-based Equalities Unit, with the support of Equalities Research. Locating it within the Equality Unit highlighted its perceived importance to the policy process of gender mainstreaming. This strategy helped ensure that other staff members would realise that EQIA was not just about collecting data to prove the usefulness of gender mainstreaming, or to help people make decisions about equality-related issues, but rather that it was considered an integral part of the policy-based equalities mainstreaming strategy. The usefulness of this strategising resulted in a higher profile for the EQIA during policy making,

as exemplified by being a listed priority during the Equalities Debate with Trevor Phillips at the Parliament (Equalities Debate, field notes, 23 Feb 2007). Members of the Mainstreaming Team recognised that EQIA needed to be integrated with broader policy developments (Social Research Professional Development Programme Project Initiation Document) in order for it to succeed. They also recognised that by placing it within the purview of the Equalities Unit, it would gain better traction with Human Resources and Central Services thereby placing greater emphasis on EQIA as an “internal tracking process” at the Executive. For example, in the initial phases of the Working Group on Equalities, members thought it would be a good idea to do an EQIA on the group and the work that the members were doing (group minutes, field notes, 22 Nov 2006) highlighting their confidence in the tool as a way to check internal processes. The deliberate strategising that members of the Mainstreaming Team did around EQIA reflects their work knowledges of their departments and the institution. They knew their departments and actively made decisions about the best ways to promote EQIA.

Reflecting

The process of developing and implementing EQIA made Mainstreaming Team members reflect on their own process of work. When EQIA was released online as an active programme in October 2006, members of the Mainstreaming Team attempted to turn their attention to other tasks. They assumed that providing the tool would enable departments to collect the data needed for the Equality Schemes that were required by the GED. This proved to be a mistaken assumption. Once EQIA went live, team members found that they had a new type of work to do. One member of the mainstreaming team told me “we got some crackin’ emails of people asking what does this have to do with me?” (Mainstreaming catch up, field notes, 14 Nov 2006). Even with guidance and support documents that the Team had provided through the typical institutional channels and their attempt to provide training to every department in the Executive, members of many departments did not know the difference between the Duties and EQIA, questioned their role in filling out EQIA, and were explicit in saying that they thought providing information on gender was the work of the Equality Unit. It became obvious that “most people were interested in exactly how much work it was going to entail for them and couldn’t see the connection to their work” (informal discussion, field notes, 14 Nov. 2006). Members of the Mainstreaming Team struggled with other departments to get the information required by the Duties to publish both the Disability and Gender Equality schemes. This struggle entailed cajoling people in other departments to gather information, feeling like they had no support from department heads, and experiencing much stronger resistance than they anticipated. They ended up ‘retro-fitting’ the information they did receive into a suitable format and translated data that was not equality specific into

data which would fit for the Scheme. In the end, Team members often resorted to doing the work themselves in order to move forward with the Schemes. This was time-consuming and left them frustrated at their lack of progress on the overall goals of the mainstreaming agenda.

Early 2007, as the Team collected data for EQIA in order to publish the Gender Equality Scheme on time, and as members of Equalities Research struggled to realign with a new supervisor, was the time when mainstreaming advocates voiced the most disappointment with the way the mainstreaming agenda was working. These frustrations revolved around working on a project without tangible outcomes and/or a time limit (informal discussion, field notes, 30 Jan 2007; informal discussion, field notes, 12 Feb 2006; meeting minutes, field notes, 19 Feb 2007). By early spring of 2007, colleagues in Equalities Research expressed impatience and frustration with the fact that the Mainstreaming Team was getting caught up in doing tasks related to EQIA and the Equality Schemes without keeping in mind the large picture, or thinking about how they fit in with the Team's outcomes and goals in relation to the overall mainstreaming strategy (informal conversation, field notes, 12 Feb. 2007).

In order to reignite the overall mainstreaming strategy, researchers asked their policy colleagues to reflect on the past year and work with them to develop a new Action Plan. During this reflection process, members of the Mainstreaming Team realised that they had ended up in a different place than where they started. They recognised that they needed to “rethink our capacity building. We’ve tried to embed it into structures but we need to do more with actual people” (meeting minutes, field notes, March 2007). The process of having to maintain a steady pressure on departments to do the initial assessment taught them that neither they nor the idea of equalities had as much salience as they hoped. By this time, there was a recognition that “leadership was missing at divisional levels to move the equalities agenda forward”, that “sustainable and consistent barriers” continued to persist, and that “things got lost” (meeting minutes, field notes, 9 March 2007) as people throughout the Executive attempted to manage competing priorities and demands on their resources and time. The Equality Unit came to recognise that they needed to do a better job supporting other departments in their own equality goals, and members of Equalities Research began to think about ways to provide support. The Mainstreaming Team realised that two years was not enough to implement gender mainstreaming the Executive and began to think about who else might become members of the Team. A few Team members recognised that they were tired of working with an intangible policy outcome and that their burnout was tremendous. Within a year, most of the original members of the Mainstreaming Team would transfer to other areas

within the Executive. The knowledge of how difficult it was to maintain a steady progress towards implementing gender mainstreaming showed itself throughout the reflection process.

The work of doing gender mainstreaming generally and the EQIA specifically meant that those active in this work gained specific work knowledges. This section has described these knowledges, and pointed to ways they were used by mainstreaming actors. The next section builds on this institutional ethnography description and examines text-work-text processes in two specific cases. In this way, the description recognises the importance of texts to the work of doing gender mainstreaming.

Text-Work-Text Processes

Work knowledges are one aspect of an institutional ethnography that give us insight into the day-to-day activities of institutional life. Another of the key ways that institutional ethnographers examine the processes of work is by paying attention to the ways that texts and work are related. This is especially useful in a political institution, where policy documents, memos and other textual sources are a large part of the day-to-day experience of working. This was no different for mainstreaming experts at the Scottish Executive. Much of their daily work was in relation to texts. For members of the Equality Unit these texts were often policy documents; for Researchers these texts were often research reports. Members of the Mainstreaming Team used texts to direct and guide their efforts to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy. This section describes text-work-text processes that occurred in 2006 and 2007. I pay special attention to the text-work-text process surrounding the Mainstreaming Team's Action Plan and the *Gender Equality Duty*.

Mainstreaming Equalities Action Plan

In 2005, the initial members of the Mainstreaming Team put together a comprehensive agenda outlining goals and outputs to be reached in two years. This was updated again in January 2006. This Action Plan included various projects associated with benchmarking, training, appraisal, and policy tools and guidance. Included in the Action Plan were goals to complete the Annual Review of the Equality Strategy, develop assessment forms and guidance for the Equality Impact Assessment, consider the focus and use of both the policy and research websites, ensure that analytical surveys are equality proofed, set up an Equality Network, and look at the possibilities of measuring outcomes of mainstreaming equalities

(internal document, field notes). This text coordinated the work of Team members to each other, the institution, external policy decision and work being done globally on gender mainstreaming.

The first year for the Mainstreaming Team went well and the Plan was assessed and checked regularly to ensure forward movement. There was support for creative thinking and personal growth within the Team (informal conversation, field notes, 30 Jan. 2007). However, by the time I arrived in mid-2006, members of the Mainstreaming Team felt as though institutional support for the gender mainstreaming agenda had waned. There was staff turnover on the Team. Those who remained began to feel like they were ‘beating their head against the wall’ (informal conversation, field notes, 30 Jan 2007) due to a lack of objectives and achievable outcomes. In addition, the enthusiasm with which others in the Executive took up the more technocratic aspects of mainstreaming – such as the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and the Gender Equality Schemes – rather than the more transformative aspects of the Plan which could actually change the organisation began to wear on the patience of those on the Team. Many items on the Action Plan got “buried” in favour of other “more pressing” issues; other goals were reached, but without reference to the Plan. For example, the action item to “look at the focus and usage of the website and consider widening the scope. Consider whether the research site could be updated and how this should be done in the future” (Mainstreaming Equalities – Action Plan, 2006, p. 3) included the suggestion to gauge usage of the site with a survey and consider how best to improve the site with links to data and research reviews. Yet, while I was brought in to update the present information – one of the items – I did not see this Action Plan until the end of my time in the Research Branch. Thus, I had no idea that there were objectives that I should have been working on in regards to the website.

In March and April 2007, more than a year after the Action Plan had been last updated, there members of the Team made an effort to refocus their attention back to outcomes and actions outlined on the Plan and think about ways to move the mainstreaming agenda forward again. Individuals responsible for gender mainstreaming met both formally and informally and discussed the role of the Team and strategies to achieve these goals. These discussions were a result of the frustration some members of the Team felt about the lack of movement on the strategic and transformational aspects of the Plan, and were supported with the introduction of the new Senior Principal Researcher who was strongly committed to the equalities and mainstreaming agenda (informal discussion, field notes, 3 April 2007). This reflection and

updating process was a complex incident involving multiple conversations, several meetings of the Mainstreaming Team and many cups of tea.

This reflection work, spurred on by need to revise the Action Plan text, revisited historical events in the internal life of the mainstreaming agenda in the Executive. The main event which needed to be resolved surrounded the publication of so-called ‘mainstreaming pilots’, which were pilot projects set up in the early 2000’s in the departments of Health and Education to determine good practice in mainstreaming. Members of the Mainstreaming Team who were from the Equalities Research Branch advocated that “rather than focus our energies on revisiting what mainstreaming work has been going on across the SE and extracting that information into a report which may only reach a very limited, interested audience, could we not start the process of reflection, learning and action within departments?” (email, 20 March 2007). Their approach included an action research project which could become a framework to help all Executive departments facilitate learning and action. The rationale behind this was that due to the work that had been done, plenty was known about what departments were doing on mainstreaming, what the barriers were, and what needed to be done to make it work. What was missing, they argued, was an approach which would allow members of the Team to reflect on the learning and decide how to move forward. This suggestion was met with resistance from the Policy Team, who wanted to “develop support for executive colleagues to mainstreaming equalities” (email, 21 March 2007) and “ensure that our commitment to reporting on the ‘mainstreaming pilots’ is followed through” (email, 27 March 2007). These commitments were due in part to a promise to Parliament to report back on the pilots and in part to different understandings of the role of the Equality Unit and Research Branch in moving the mainstreaming agenda forward.⁷²

The debate about what to do with the mainstreaming pilots was never fully resolved while I was there. The tension between the policy officers and the researchers over what to do with the pilots was part of a deeper tension about the priorities of different departments in the Executive. However, the process did lead the Mainstreaming Team to revisit their Action Plan and begin new discussions about what the future of the gender and equalities mainstreaming strategy should look like. The text-work-text process continued after I left. This internal discussion revealed the tensions and struggles which people who all were committed to gender, mainstreaming and equalities went through in order to move the

⁷² It is also a result of different senses of time, which I discuss further in Chapter Six.

mainstreaming agenda forward within the Executive. For example, revising the text of the Action Plan led to the discussion of what work should be done in regards to the mainstreaming pilots. In this instance the text coordinated the actions and reflections of the Mainstreaming Team.

The Gender Equality Duty

The Action Plan coordinated the work of the Gender Mainstreaming team, but the *Gender Equality Duty* (GED) was the primary text which organised the work of for all gender equality advocates in the Scottish Executive. The GED served to coordinate all efforts for gender equality throughout the Executive. Like many policy documents, the GED outlines Parliament's definitions and expectations about gender equality, making invisible the heated discussions and debates which go into these definitions and expectations. It provided a textual vision of how to ensure gender equality in public bodies in Scotland by outlining the work that needed to be done for compliance. Since members of the Mainstreaming Team had decided that they wanted the Scottish Executive to be an exemplar of compliance, the GED became a significant text to which work for the Mainstreaming Team was oriented.

Following the text-work-text processes surrounding the use of the Gender Equality Duty, I mapped the process that occurred from the passing of the GED in 2006 to the publication of the Executive Gender Scheme in 2007 as these two texts formed the core texts from which gender mainstreaming advocates worked. In order to implement the GED, specific types of work needed to be done by specific people in the Executive. The Mainstreaming Team of the Equality Unit spearheaded the efforts of compliance, working closely with members of the Equality Research branch and other gender equality advocates throughout the organisation. This work included interpreting the GED requirements, deciding the best way to ensure compliance at the Executive, writing the rubric which department heads would need to fill out about gender equality actions and goals, and developing and implementing the Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) tool. Mainstreaming Team members felt strongly that the work of compliance in accordance with mainstreaming policy should have been done by others throughout the Executive. In this way, work done by those committed to the GED became coordinated to work done by departmental heads who were responsible for the collection of data at the departmental level. However, they quickly learned that their expectations, based on fulfilling the requirements set out by the GED, were not aligned with most department heads, who experienced many competing requests for their time and work efforts.

The *Gender Equality Duty* coordinated the efforts of the Research Branch in specific ways. During the last part of 2006, members of the Research Branch spent time working on the publication of High Level Summary of Equalities Statistics⁷³, which was a publication requested by the Mainstreaming Team and other equalities champions in the Executive. As part of the mainstreaming strategy to obtain more equality-disaggregated statistics, the Senior Principal Researcher worked in conjunction with the Chief Statistician to publish the report. Its purpose was to provide gender and equalities-aware statistical information to be used as evidence to inform the EQIA, the Equality Schemes, and other policies and processes which needed to take equalities into account. This publication was also considered a success by the Mainstreaming Team since working with statisticians had previously proven to be difficult. The fact that the High Level Summary was published by a group that was not generally considered to be equality friendly was seen by the Team to be an encouraging sign.

In addition, the *Gender Equality Duty* was an important text in the life of the EQIA. From Summer 2006 through Spring 2007, in order to comply with the *Gender Equality Duty* and prepare for the publication of the *Gender Equality Scheme*, the Equality Unit continued to push forward with the EQIA and began to provide training to all the departments on the tool. During the summer of 2006, internal meetings were held by members of the Mainstreaming Team and colleagues from the Research Branch to discuss ways to move forward the implementation of EQIA, contemplate possible setbacks, and use each other as support. At that time, the EQIA was a working document and was promoted an “ongoing” effort to meet mainstreaming protocol and the GED. The initial EQIA document was drafted by the three members of the Mainstreaming Team. It was then approved by the C-1 in charge of the Gender and Mainstreaming Equality Team and the Senior Civil Servant who oversaw the Equality Unit. In conjunction with drafting the EQIA document, discussions also occurred between members of the Mainstreaming Team and the webmasters, as EQIA was always meant to be online for the easy use of colleagues in the Executive (meeting minutes, field notes, 1 Sept 2006). The interactive nature of the GED and the EQIA coordinated the Mainstreaming Team’s efforts to fulfil the requirements of both texts at the same time.

The work on the Mainstreaming Team during the first part of 2007 became almost exclusively oriented towards writing up the departmental gender schemes. This process entailed taking what had been given to them by department heads and making it apply to equalities as defined

⁷³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/11/20102424/0>. The updated version from May 2008 can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/hlsspub08>

by the GED. This strain on time and resources in the midst of the effort to develop new departmental documents from which the Executive-wide Gender Equality Scheme would be developed became a much more difficult task than the Mainstreaming Team initially envisioned. Often this meant following up with departments, using personal contacts and relationships to ensure that department heads sent in the data, searching for equalities-related goals in reports that were not explicitly equalities related, and occasionally filling out the rubrics themselves. Team members had to make the information given to them applicable to the GED, and wanted to ensure that it put the Executive in a good light. To do this, they used acceptable language and concepts that resonated with both policy makers and equalities advocates. They were strategic in their language, thus coordinating themselves to institutional discourses, and aware that the final document should resonate with previous work done in the name of equalities and gender mainstreaming.

This work resulted in the final document of the *Gender Scheme*, which was published on the website. As a document, it conceals and obscures the work done by the Mainstreaming Team on behalf of recalcitrant departments and it presents a cohesive version of gender equality efforts being done throughout the Executive. The *Scheme* makes it appear that there has been consistent work done comprehensively throughout the Executive on gender equality, and that this steady pace will continue. In reality the work was patchy, done by a committed group of individuals, and occurred in fits and starts. In this case of text-work-text, the texts oriented the work done by gender equality advocates in the Executive, as well as made invisible much of this work. They stand as a testimony to the relations of ruling which call for policy documents to present a unified and comprehensive vision to the public, discounting much of the everyday work that occurs in the process of writing and publishing the text.

The interwoven text-work-text process of the *Gender Equality Duty*, the EQIA and research documents highlight the interconnected nature of texts and work for mainstreaming experts in the Executive. Texts activate certain types of work, and work is often done in response to textual prodding. The importance of seeing the ways texts and work come together highlights how everyday experiences in the Executive were coordinated among intervals and to external events, ideas and pressures. Together with a description of work knowledges, the process of mapping text-work-text processes uncovers much of the hidden work done by gender change agents in the Executive.

More Types of Work

External Relations

While work done directly in relation to gender mainstreaming was a central aspect of the work done by gender mainstreaming advocates and equality experts in the Executive, it was by no means the only work they did. The following section explores the other types of work that occurred, highlighting how much effort went in to doing activities which were not related to the remit or job descriptions of gender mainstreaming experts and advocates. One of the other types of work done outside of the substantive work of equalities and gender mainstreaming often revolved around what I call “external relations.” External relations work was done so that the members of the Equality Unit and Equalities Research stayed in touch with their external stakeholders, contractors, and other equalities professionals. There was an internal aspect to this type of work as staff used their external contacts to keep them briefed on the equalities landscape outside of the Executive, but much of this work centred on disseminating the Executive’s message to external parties; it was the outward focused area of work for my colleagues. Because of this outward focus, this type of work was often what external parties perceived as the ‘real’ work of the Executive staff.

Working with contractors was at the core of what social researchers did. They kept in contact with them through email and phone conversations, and often met in person with the contractors and whomever the internal group was that had commissioned the research – often members of the Equality Unit. For the researchers, this was an important aspect of staying in touch with the private research and academic communities, as members of both groups were key contacts and resources. Developing and maintaining good relationships with external contractors was important because the Research staff liked knowing whom they could depend on for timely, well-written and useful advice and evidence. The researchers worked very hard to find and work with contractors who could be trusted. When this relationship failed, the social researchers got upset; finding a new contractor in the middle of a project heavily cost the Branch in time, financial resources, and relationship potential.

Beyond working with contractors, various other external relations matters took up time for members of staff. In both the Research Branch and the Equality Unit, the heads of the departments and other members of staff were perceived as the experts on the Executive’s

position on equality-related issues and were responsible for taking calls from the media and interest groups. They also routinely represented the Executive as speakers at conferences and seminars on equality and diversity issues. In these roles, they were expected to speak for the government and to represent the Executive's position on equality topics. I never heard any member of staff complain about this role as a liaison between the government and outside groups. They expressed enjoyment in getting out of the office and talking with people who were working in the area "on the ground" but it was certainly a role which took work. Preparing PowerPoint slides and speeches entailed making sure they provided relevant information that was useful and interesting to the group while promoting the government's choices and agenda. In the Research Branch, people booked their own travel and negotiated administrative systems related to travelling. The actual time spent away from the office was also always considered.

Members of the Gender Mainstreaming Team in the Equality Unit worked closely with groups like the Scottish Women's Convention⁷⁴ and Engender⁷⁵ who promote and support women in Scotland. They worked in conjunction with Parliamentary groups such as the Equal Opportunities Committee to work for a joined-up approach to equal opportunities. They also responded to external groups' reports. For example, in November 2006, they responded to the UK Women and Work Commission report with recommendations on issues like the pay gap, gender stereotyping, and occupational segregation⁷⁶. As the policy-focused Unit, their external relations were focused on supporting the policy connections with external stakeholders.

Research-based members of Gender Mainstreaming Team focused more on internal matters; they did not generally deal with external relations.⁷⁷ However, the work that they did had external implications. The Executive was required to come up with practices which could then be used by other public bodies to implement and institutionalise mainstreaming. The way the Executive went about doing mainstreaming was watched closely by external groups. Therefore, even though the work of mainstreaming was done internally, members of the

⁷⁴ An independent body funded by the Scottish Executive which provides an institutionalised forum for including women's voices into the policy process.

⁷⁵ A membership charity which promotes an anti-sexist agenda in Scotland and Europe. See <http://www.engender.org.uk/>

⁷⁶ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18500/UKWWC> for the Scottish Executive's response to the Women and Work Commission's Report (2006b).

⁷⁷ At least in relation to gender mainstreaming *per se*. They did deal with external relations extensively when performing other roles in their jobs.

group were conscious that they had an external audience for their programmes, trainings, assessment tools, etc.

The work done to maintain and develop external relations may not have been substantive to the work of my colleagues but it was extremely important. This work was what enabled the government to stay in touch with, learn from, and teach outsiders to the Executive about what was going on inside the Executive. People beyond the Executive found this to be the most important aspect of work that members of staff did, which also led my colleagues to take the work of external relations very seriously. They knew that external stakeholders' perceptions of the mainstreaming and equalities agenda were vital to maintaining relationships and political presence. Thus, the internal politics of mainstreaming were most often kept invisible during contact with those outside the Executive; instead, an agreed upon and coherent message was presented.

Administrative Work

One of the largest competitors to substantive and external relations work that staff at the Executive dealt with was administrative work. This type of work was done to fulfil the requirements that came with working for a large organisation like the Civil Service. This type of work often worked in conjunction with, and was essential to, allowing the staff to proceed with their other types of work, but it was much less substantive or fulfilling and it tended to be frustrating and time-consuming. All of the work done on behalf of equalities and gender mainstreaming must be seen within the context of the organisation in which it was performed. The Civil Service limits the substantive work of doing equalities by injecting administrative work throughout all other forms of work. Staff must do the administrative work, paper work, or "admin" as it was called, in order to effectively move forward with the rest of their work. Doing "admin" was a headache for most people and people took steps to avoid it. For example, booking rooms for meetings through the central booking service was not very efficient, so people would set up meetings in the canteen. Ordering letterhead and stationery took weeks of emails with the administrative staff, so when one person put in an order, they would do so on behalf of the entire Team. Coping behaviours to deal with administrative work were shared among new members of staff, and people rejoiced at stories where someone "got around admin" in new and effective ways.

The Heads of the Teams dealt with the most administrative types of work, as they were essentially the managers for their Teams. In the Research Branch, the Principal Researcher was responsible for paperwork on everything from new hires to contracts to budgeting. The constant flow of administrative work often made it hard for her to get on with other aspects of her job. One C-1 in particular used to complain about having so many emails that she would have to do hours of work to respond to old emails before the system would even update her with new ones. Researchers' and policy officers' administrative work centred more on their individual projects. Thus, for example, researchers had to make sure that paperwork was filed in order get reports published or policy officers had to format information into set forms to send it to the Minister.⁷⁸ Regardless of the type of administrative work, much of it was about working with people in the system in order to prepare the way for successful outcomes of paperwork and admin tasks; therefore, staying in touch on email and in person was part of the work. As with other types of work, knowing the right people helped make the work easier.

In administrative work the right people to know were different than the right people to know to do the work of equalities and mainstreaming. To deal with this administrative work, the best people to know were A-band staff and the staff in the lower B-bands who took on many of the roles as personal assistants and specialist staff. Those in lower B-bands were in charge of websites or responsible for specific research tasks, as opposed to staff who worked in upper B-bands, C-bands and the professional equality experts outside of the Executive who were content experts but did not have the same work knowledge for negotiating the bureaucracy. Maintaining these relationships took a different type of work that relied on negotiating power and hierarchical structures which infused these relationships. In the Research Branch, there was tacit knowledge that crossing the divide between the A-band staff and B and C-band staff⁷⁹ required a different approach than working with other colleagues. Researchers were careful to not ask too much of the 'already over-worked' administrative Team and attempted to get their facts in order before approaching any one. Even though the administrative staff were the gatekeepers to the bureaucratic systems which governed so much of Executive life,⁸⁰ it was good to have some knowledge of the system as this allowed space for a more fruitful

⁷⁸ These are examples of practices and hierarchical power relations, which I take up further in Chapter Six.

⁷⁹ This divide was not just theoretical; it was reinforced through the special arrangement in the office. The desks of the Principal Researchers were in one row, closest to the windows of the open plan office. Senior researchers, statisticians and economists sat in groups of four in the middle of the room. The admin and A-band staff sat in groups of two at desks which were closest to the interior of the building.

⁸⁰ See Chapter Six for more discussion on the role of bureaucratic context and systems.

conversation, which in turn meant that work could be moved through the system quickly and more effectively.

Because administrative work depended on effectively moving through bureaucratic systems which the professional staff were less familiar with, doing administrative work was often tedious and frustrating. It entailed knowing the varied systems that permeated every aspect of work in the Executive, such as the e-filing system⁸¹, who to contact to arrange travel, or how to fill out HR paperwork. It also took knowledge about what questions to ask and whom to go to for information. Finding out information was made easier through the use of the staff intranet, although the online aspects of the bureaucracy were not always joined-up with actual practice. Sometimes researchers felt it was more productive to learn the system themselves than rely on administrative staff, email, the intranet, or help desks that had been set up to guide staff through various systems such as IT, HR and payroll. One of the most frustrating aspects of administrative work for those working in equalities was the requirement to fit their substantive work into the forms, styles and common practices required by the Civil Service, all of which were done by attending to bureaucratic work. Staff on both the Research and policy Teams often voiced their annoyance at trying to fulfil the requirements of the bureaucracy while maintaining an equalities perspective.⁸² There was also a prevailing underlying assumption that the systems in place only made their substantive work harder to do so they constantly looked for ways to more effectively navigate through, subvert or negotiate administrative work.

Those working on equalities were also very cognisant of the gendered nature of bureaucratic work. They understood that most of the administrative staff, with the exception of those working in IT, was female and therefore made an effort to not fall into entrenched norms of a professional/administrative split. In some cases, such as when members of the Research Branch did their own travel booking, they took on more administrative work of their own in an effort to relieve the administrative staff of extra work. They also made conscious and repeated efforts to show their appreciation for the administrative Team.

⁸¹ eRDM: electronic record and document management

⁸² Chapter Five elaborates on this point, discussion the importance of competing worldviews for equalities work in the Executive.

The bureaucratic work done by my colleagues was done because it enabled other types of work to get done. It was not a type of work which they generally enjoyed; in fact, they often felt like the time spent doing administrative work could have been better spent on substantive work. They worked with administrative staff to manipulate systems as best they could to be effective and efficient, while also being attuned to the gendered nature of administrative work. Yet no matter how little they enjoyed this type of work, they also recognised that doing administrative work was a necessity for being successful in the Executive and the Civil Service as promotions and advancement were often based very much being able to successfully navigate Civil Service procedures and systems⁸³.

Branch/Divisional/Departmental Caretaking

In addition to doing bureaucratic work as part of their connection to the Executive, members of the Equalities Research Branch and the Equality Unit also did work that can be considered as care of their internal units. In the Research Branch, this entailed various types of work such as preparing for and actively participating in Branch, divisional and departmental meetings, serving on committees which dealt with internal events like Away Days, attending talks given by other researchers, or coordinating a ‘whip around’ for someone who was leaving. Another aspect of this type of caretaking work was seen when staff worked across the Executive to share information and knowledge about their own specialty areas. All of this was the work done for the communal good of the work place. It was not work recognised on job descriptions or in the allocation of resources, but people took part in it regardless and approached with the same seriousness and diligence as other types of work.

In the Research Team, and across the Analytical Services Division, members of staff at all band levels worked as caretakers for their Division. Sometimes this was done through formal commitments like serving on the committee which planned Away Days or seminars where researchers could give a presentation to their colleagues on a topic of their choice. It was also done informally. For example, the ASD had taken a corner of the office and turned it into an informal lending library of books, CDs and DVDs. Staff brought in material they were willing to part with and exchanged it for what was already there. The library was not policed in any way; the expectation was that you would return what was there or add new material. It

⁸³ See Chapter Six for more discussion on the Civil Service model and critiques of prevailing norms.

also served as the office's 'water cooler' where people would gather to compare notes about what they had read, seen or listened to which then often led into other discussions.

Other aspects of caretaking work occurred in Branch, departmental and divisional meetings. Branch meetings for the Equalities Research Branch were supportive and nurturing experiences. They were times in which substantive information was exchanged and focused work was accomplished, but they also served to strengthen the bond between the researchers through sharing experiences and exchanging coping techniques. In these meetings, members of staff who had been part of the Branch longer acted as mentors and conveyers of institutional memory,⁸⁴ thus helping to transition new members into the Branch. The intimacy and fun of the Branch meetings grew less at meetings further up the organisational structure, but they still operated as spaces where caretaking, induction, and community building occurred.

When asked, both researchers and policy officers provided an informal equalities perspective for others in the Executive. For example, my boss in Research was asked to give an opinion on taking the classification 'Black' out of the census. This became the cause of many informal debates, conversations and 'catch up chats' for staff members across the Executive. In the case of many equalities experts, doing the work to make sure that people understood the complexity of the issue was part of their commitment to informally educating other colleagues about issues which they found important. They were not expected to lobby so passionately about the topic as it was not officially part of their official equalities or mainstreaming work. Yet, they worked hard and spent time on talking with their colleagues about the issue. Therefore, while this could be considered to be part of the substantive work of mainstreaming equalities, in practice it was an example of how members of the research Team took on an informal, unrecognised caretaking role.

One of the distinct aspects of much of the caretaking work that I observed was that it was work which often went unnoticed as work, especially when it was done by women. In the ASD, for example, the work of organising cards and gifts for birthdays, women going on maternity leave, leaving parties and retirement events was handled almost exclusively by women. Men would donate money and sign cards, and often the male senior management

⁸⁴ For more on institutional memory, see Chapter Five

would speak at these events on behalf of the department or division, but the behind-the-scenes coordination was the work of women.

Caretaking work was important to the life and community of the Department, the Division and the Branch. It was also work which my colleagues enjoyed doing. They got satisfaction out of the work that went on to strengthen bonds and develop relationship with their co-workers. I do not think they perceived the caretaking work they did as work. It was a different kind of activity and considered a break from other types of work.

Work Behind Socialising

Closely associated to caretaking work was work done for social reasons. It is similar to caretaking work in that it often went unnoticed as work and was important for building community, but it is different because it was consciously separated from the job. Whereas much of the caretaking work centred on work life and work knowledges, work done socially was specifically constructed as non-work related. In addition, while all the other types of work I have mentioned had a relational aspect to them, work done socially was more deliberately situated around developing, maintaining and strengthening relationships.

Social work was most often done away from people's desks, computers, reports and other accoutrements of the job. It was done in more informal spaces like the canteen and lounges which, while often used for substantive work as well, provided a more relaxed and informal atmosphere. Lunch provided the most time for this type of work to get done, but going for 'a chat' over coffee or tea was often short hand for doing this type of work.⁸⁵ People would also use time and spaces away from the Executive to engage in social work. Thus, trips to conferences and meetings, meetings at cafes around the Executive, or outings to nearby shops provided time and space for social work to get done.

The importance of work that is social in nature was that it allowed people to develop relationships with others based on other aspects of the lives besides their shared experience of working at the Executive. Conversations about families, friends, flats, movies, books and other social topics allowed people to be able to talk about something other than work. This

⁸⁵ See Chapter Six for more information on Executive-speak and the role of language in the Executive.

was especially useful for people who worked in different research or policy teams. Having things in common other than work allowed housing, planning and equalities researchers, statisticians and economists to develop more meaningful relationships. For equalities champions, social relationships with other members of the Executive allowed staff to move beyond stereotypes with people who might otherwise be wary of feminists, racial experts, or disability advocates.

Doing the work to develop social relationships allowed people to move beyond work, but it also opened up spaces for better work relations. Women, in particular, did not keep their social work distinct and separate from other types of work in which they were involved. For example, one female researcher giving advice to another about dealing with sick parents could easily transform into a discussion about how to negotiate the flexi-time leave system to best accommodate family needs. While many of the women I worked with did try and keep social work separate from job related work, this slippage was common.

Social work was done less consciously and less often than other types of work, but it still played an important part in the way people interacted with each other. The work done by staff to maintain social relationships gave them a break from their job related work. At the same time, this type of work was essential for success in other areas of work. It was work which did not seem to be work, but which people spent time on nonetheless

Work of Doing Nothing

One last type of work which people engaged in was the work of doing nothing. This is not the absence of work or people being lazy; rather it was work which went on in and amongst all the other types of work that Executive staff did. The work of doing nothing was basically the work of waiting. Staff had to spend time waiting for work to get done ‘elsewhere.’ This could be due to waiting for another person to do their promised work on a job. It might be in relation to waiting for something to work its way through a system. Often, the policy staff had to do nothing while events played themselves out in Parliament. These events all transpired into the work of doing nothing.

The work of doing nothing was the work of being patient while external forces played themselves out on the work of the equalities staff. Being part of such a large bureaucracy

meant that processes were often multi-layered, dependent on many people, and slow. Thus, it was never enough to just do your part of a job. There would always be further work involved in waiting for the rest of the process to be completed. In conjunction with being patient, it was the work of knowing that you had no control over the rest of the process. A member of staff could be completely successful at her aspect of the job, but she then had to let it go with the expectation that it would be completed successfully by others or by the system. Learning to be prepared for these aspects of the emotional work of doing nothing was often a difficult process, especially for those people, like many equalities champions and experts, who were committed to the outcome of their work.

The work of doing nothing manifested itself in people being bored, taking long lunch breaks, and surfing the internet. They participated in activities which took up time but were not directly related to any of the types of work I have mentioned. These activities were by-products of people having to wait for systems beyond their control. The activities may have seemed like ones which people did to avoid work, but they were actually activities linked to a type of work associated with working in large bureaucracies. In the Research Branch, the work of doing nothing was essential to helping people fill the time while other types of work played themselves out elsewhere in the organisation.

In addition, the work of doing nothing also provided space for people to recharge and take personal time during the work day. By taking advantage of breaks offered by the system taking over control of a process or job, staff could avoid stress in both their professional and personal lives. I worked alongside people who planned their life after retirement, bought and sold homes, went through divorces and otherwise lived their lives while at work. They could only have managed this by participating in the work of doing nothing.

Of all the types of work which I have covered, the work of doing nothing is by far the most invisible. In many ways, it seems to be the antithesis of work. However, it was a type of work in which people actively and continuously participated. It is important to highlight it as a type of work with roots in bureaucracy and organisational systems. I also want to ensure that the activities surrounding the work of doing nothing get recognised as a type of work, rather than activities related to not working.

Conclusion

The types of work being done by those involved with equalities and mainstreaming is varied. It covers everything from the very substantive work being done to further the equalities and mainstreaming agendas – the work laid out in job descriptions – to the ethereal work of doing nothing – work which is often dismissed as the very opposite of work. From this description of work types, we can see the immense amounts of work which members of the Equalities Research Branch and Gender and Mainstreaming Team are doing. Yet, what also becomes clear is that not all of this work is centred on mainstreaming or even on equalities.

The theory of mainstreaming suggests that once it is truly implemented, gender and equalities will permeate all aspects of organisational life. It will no longer be the work of a certain few, but will become work in which everyone in the organisation takes part. However, the description suggests something far more complex. The recognition that even those whose main job focus is mainstreaming do quite a bit of work that is not impacted by mainstreaming highlights a gap between theory and practice. We begin to see that organisational life is much more complex than mainstreaming theory takes into account. Different types of work open up, as well as close down, spaces for the mainstreaming process to be effective.

By looking at the everyday level of work, we begin to see how much work is being done that has yet to be understood through a mainstreaming framework. Being attuned to the types of work being done and the ways in which it gets done helps us see the gaps between theories of mainstreaming and the realities of implementing it, even in organisations dedicated to the concept. My description draws attention to the ways that much of the everyday work being done even by equalities and mainstreaming champions – although gendered – has little to do with gender mainstreaming as it is outlined in the literature. In fact, taking a deeper look at the various types of work being done – both nominally and substantially associated with gender mainstreaming – gives us a more complex understanding of how the process of gender mainstreaming does and does not work, especially within the parameters of complexly gendered organisations. Thus, this description sets the scene for the following three Chapters which attempt to place the everyday work of gender mainstreaming experts in the Executive within their larger institutional context, and further relate these work knowledges, text-work-text processes and work types to relations of ruling.

This description highlights what the work knowledges and text-work-text processes of activities done in relation to the gender mainstreaming agenda, and explores other aspects of work done by those in the roles of mainstreaming advocate. The next two Chapters analyse these work experiences using the concepts of actors and practices as central themes gleaned from the data. The essence of these themes emerged relatively early in my data collection process. The data collected from the remaining time of my field work served to reinforce and add nuance to the original themes and subsequently they have undergone multiple developments and transformations. My analysis will focus on the ways that institutional and social hierarchies play a crucial role in supporting power flows back and forth between the micro and macro levels and explore how actors interact with power everyday. I explore how everyday experiences are concretely tied to formal and informal everyday practices and how these practices are both the product of and have consequences upon institutional practices and relations of ruling. I highlight how change, at both the personal and organisational level, is what the policy of gender mainstreaming and the implementers of the policy are most concerned with, yet the everyday dynamics of change highlight the complex reality of trying to make change occur in a static organisation like the Civil Service. Through the exploration of everyday work related to actors and practices I am able to thematically tie together the local experiences of doing gender mainstreaming work in the Scottish Executive with the wider relations of ruling and explore further why gender mainstreaming in the Executive is not fulfilling its radical promise.

Actors, Strategies and Dilemmas in Gender Mainstreaming

In this chapter, I focus on people – the individuals and institutional actors who promote gender mainstreaming in the Executive. The data presented here examines bureaucratic actors doing gender mainstreaming at the Scottish Executive. I will consider those who consider themselves “inside agitators”, gender and mainstreaming experts and feminists at the same time as they see themselves as well as civil servants, diversity coordinators and Executive staff. I focus on members of the Gender Mainstreaming team, equality experts in the Equality Unit, and equality advocates in social research. I also recognise collective institutional actors such as the Equality Unit, the Social Justice Research branch and the Mainstreaming Equality Team. In addition, I pay attention to the institutional actors whose work places them in the proximity of those who work on gender mainstreaming.

Having laid out the context of work in the previous chapter, I now turn to thinking about the individuals who did that work. An institutional ethnography not only pays attention to the work being done, but also maintains a focus on the actors doing the work. Since an institutional ethnography begins in the actualities of individuals in organisations, actors have an important analytical importance to the researcher. This actor-centered approach from institutional ethnography was supported through the data collected during my ethnographic experience at the Scottish Executive. It became clear that I could not focus on the process of institutionalising and implementing gender mainstreaming without paying close attention to gender mainstreaming actors themselves. This chapter examines the role of actors important to the gender mainstreaming process, the strategies these actors use to maintain their personal and professional legitimacy within the organisation, and the dilemmas which mainstreaming advocates face as they implement and institutionalise the policy. Throughout the chapter, I will argue that paying close attention to actors helps uncover hidden barriers to the radical agenda of mainstreaming.

This chapter examines the connection between actors and the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive. Through an

examination of ethnographic data, I answer the questions: How is the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming tied to actors? How and why do actors use intentional strategies to promote the mainstreaming agenda? What dilemmas do actors face in attempting to implement and institutionalise gender mainstreaming? I examine the actors important to gender mainstreaming, explore the naming and framing strategies and other repertoires of action used by key actors in their efforts to promote gender mainstreaming as a legitimate policy goal and institutional practice, and reveal internal debates and dilemmas which actors face as they move towards their goal.

I have chosen to present the stories and data in the places where I find them to be the most relevant. However, I fully recognise that there is an interactive dynamic to my data, and that the stories of these experiences can be analysed through multiple lenses. I revisit some of the same stories in order to tease out multiple layers of meaning and to point to the interrelated nature of the analysis. My data highlights how these gender advocates work within a pervading norm of masculinity. It also examines the consequences of staff churn and competing worldviews on gender mainstreaming advocates and suggests that strategising forces actors to adopt legitimising practices that may work against their radical change agenda. My data also reveals that while gender mainstreaming cannot succeed unless people who do not care about gender equality take it up, this is unlikely to happen because of the continued reliance on gender mainstreaming experts and advocates. These themes are explored in further detail throughout the chapter.

Gendered Actors in the Executive

Throughout my fieldwork, I paid special attention to the gendered aspects of the actors with whom I worked. By this I mean I was aware of my colleagues as women and men, as well as individuals who enacted feminine and masculine traits. In this section, I map out gendered actors in terms of the numbers of men and women working in the Executive. I also explore the importance of masculinities and femininities and their impacts on the environment in which mainstreaming advocates worked.

To understand the actors important to gender mainstreaming, it was important to know who was working in the Scottish Executive. In the Analytical Services Division, where the

Equalities Research branch was located, the head of the Division was male, the senior principal researcher and senior statistician were male, and of the nine branches, three were headed by males, two vacancies had males as previous heads or were currently being managed by males, there were two females, and two vacancies. The mid-level B-grades were more evenly split between men and women, and the administrative A-grades were overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, staffed by women. There was the perception that there was a further gendered split between social researchers (female) and statisticians and economists (male), which is also seen. Of social researchers, there were nine women and four men at the B or C grades; for statisticians and economists, there were two women and seven men at the B or C grades. The Head of the Division was a statistician, and social researchers often commented that this meant he was more receptive to statistical and economic research than social research, indirectly devaluing the work more done by women in the division. One colleague mentioned after a Divisional meeting, “I think there’s something about economists, about data, that makes equalities and maybe female social researchers...that they find...fluffy” (divisional meeting, field notes, 5 March 2007). The Gender Mainstreaming team was headed by a woman, and there was a female B-2 social researcher and a female policy officer. There was also a male policy officer, and a male A-3 who performed administrative roles and was in charge of the website.

The pyramid effect so often noted in research on gender and work, where men hold more of the positions further up the ranks, was not just seen in the research division where I worked, it was also apparent in the Scottish Executive as a whole, and within all of the Civil Service in the UK. At the UK level, the Office of National Statistics July 2007 report (Livesey, Taylor and Jones, 2007) which contains data from the year ending in September 2006 reports an almost equal number of women (24,650) and men (24,270) worked in the Civil Service in Scotland. At the UK level, the proportion of median women’s salaries to that of men’s was 81.0%, rising from 79.1% in 2005. Over half of all Civil Servants were women (52.9%), although they continued to be clustered in junior administrative grades (61.5% of junior administrative employees are women). Women still made up less than 30% of all Senior Civil Servants.

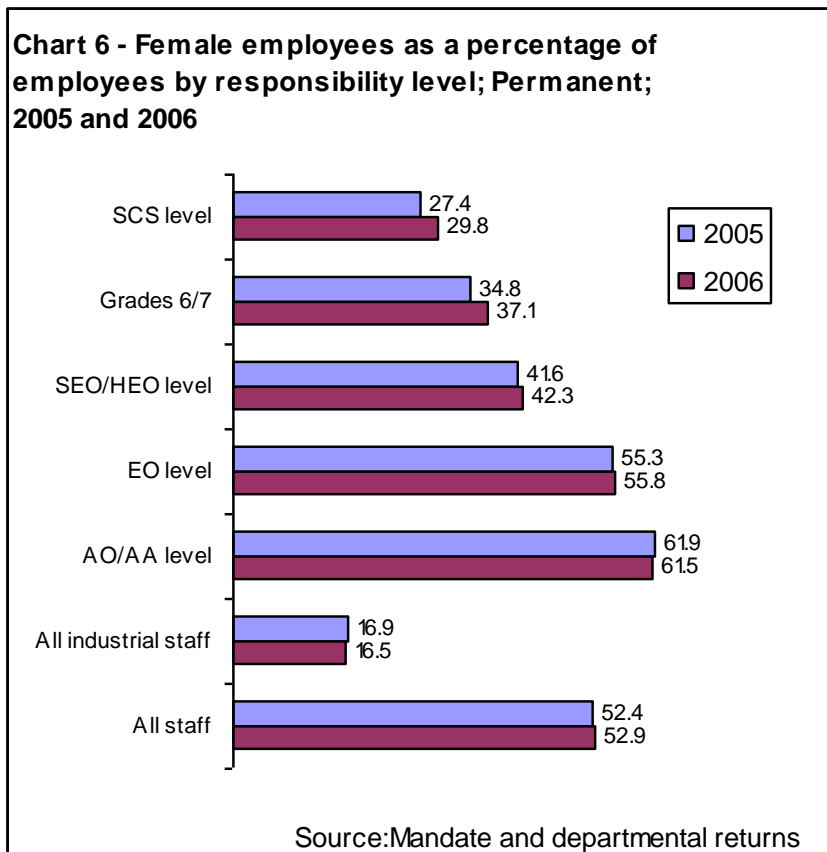


Figure 5.1: Office of National Statistics (2007a)

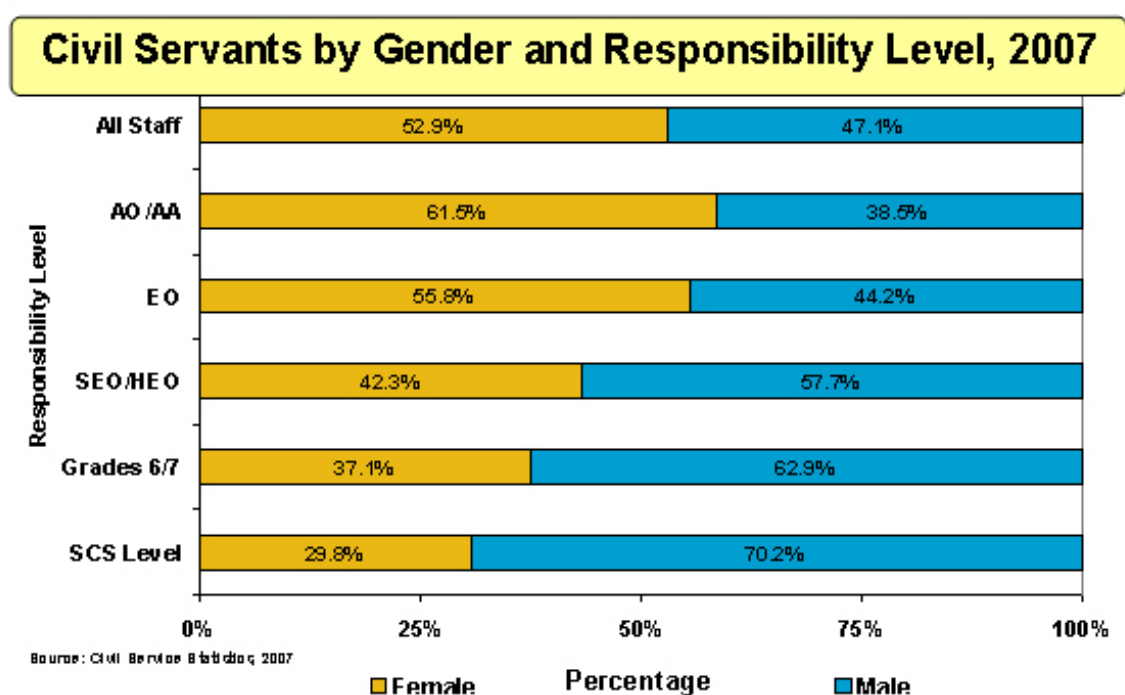


Figure 5.2: Office of National Statistics (2007b)

The pyramid trend of male dominance was replicated at divisional, Scottish and UK-wide levels. However, it was not just the number of men who held more senior positions that mattered. There was also a sense of masculinity that pervaded the organisation due the sedimentation of masculine norms and practices that existed as a result of the legacy of male dominance. As I discussed in Chapter One, bureaucracies are permeated with masculinist norms not only because they are dominated by male bodies, but because cultural ideals of masculinity are embedded in institutional practices, processes and norms. These were reflected in the Executive.

Connell's (1995) concepts of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities as normative ideas around which men position themselves in relation to other men, and to women, is useful to my discussion. Hegemonic masculinity is a normative ideal of masculinity where one way of being masculine is given credence over all others, and although only a minority of men may enact it, it carries such weight that it requires other masculinities to position themselves in relation to it (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The workings of hegemonic masculinity have been significantly studied in the organisation and bureaucracy literature to trace ways that hegemonic masculinities get organised and what role hierarchies of masculinity have in organisational decision making (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; see also Cheng, 1996; Cockburn, 1991; Messerschmidt, 1995). While early studies of organisations tended to posit a monolithic masculinist dominance in the form of patriarchy (Cockburn, 1991; Franzway, Court and Connell, 1989), what has become clear in more recent research is that competing forms of masculinity come about due to specific circumstances and that there can be "a struggle for hegemony, and older forms of masculinity might be displaced by new ones" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 833). My research highlights this struggle, as I observed a complex interaction between forms of masculinity amongst actors in the Executive.

As I will demonstrate in the next section, it became apparent throughout my time at the Executive that the traditional bureaucratic norms and values that are typical of state bureaucracies made a formidable type of masculine power that continued to influence the everyday world of the Executive. However, this is not the only type of masculinity which exists. As I will demonstrate through the discussion of "Craig and his Blue Suits" in the next section, there were competing forms of masculinity within the organisation.

Blue Suits, New Men and Footballers: Men and Masculinity Matter

Craig was a young guy, straight out of university who worked as a statistician. He came into the position about half way through my time at the Executive and was excited about the prospect of working for the Executive. I got to chatting with him one day because he sat near my desk, and was close to me in age. As we talked, I began to realise he represented a different type of masculinity than I had previously come across in the Executive – this came to my attention when the conversation turned, very seriously, to the subject of where a guy could get a good dress shirt. Craig had noticed that while many of the men who worked in A-band and lower B-band jobs dressed casually in jeans and polo shirts, the CIs he worked with looked more professional and that was who he decided he wanted to emulate. However, he also recognised that he did not want to be a “traditional Civil Service blue suit.” He wanted to look good and, thus, was on a quest to find the right mix of dress clothes that would be both professional and trendy. As I talked more with Craig, I found that he had different expectations from the Civil Service that moved beyond looking a new part. He thought about ways to take advantage of flexi-time and had looked into the Executive’s family policies (for the future). He laughed when I mentioned that those were all issues that women generally thought about when taking a job and merely said “yeah, they’re important to everyone.” Craig was a young professional - smart, educated in Scotland, and interested in being part of the Civil Service but only if he could make it work for him.

While my primary interest was focused on actors directly related to gender mainstreaming, it became apparent that I also needed to be aware of those actors whose work placed them in the proximity of mainstreaming advocates. Paying attention to these other institutional actors allowed me to situate equality and mainstreaming experts within a wider organisational context. To understand this context within which gender mainstreaming advocates worked, I had to be aware of both men and women, and of the relationships between masculinity and femininity that operated in the organisation. In doing so, I became conscious not only that masculinity was operating strongly in the Executive, but that it had real consequences for the everyday lives of those working in gender mainstreaming. Men and masculinity, in formal and informal ways, matter to the gendered life of the Executive and thus impact gender mainstreaming actors. Masculinity plays a large role in deciding how men interact with each other, and with women. It also impacts how women act with one another. Men matter, fundamentally, because they still hold positions of power and those who hold power inform

the range of choices available for others in the organisation. Yet, interestingly, masculinity operated in multiple ways for different actors within the organisation.

Craig, representing the New Man Civil Servant, talked about the Blue Suits as a particular type of civil servant whom he did not want to emulate. The Blue Suits are representative of the very traditional career civil servants, like a man I worked with who was a C1 but who still used two fingers to type because he never learned, having always had secretaries to type up his work for him. Many of the Blue Suits were referred to as “dinosaurs” by other civil servants, yet many of them were in middle and upper level management positions, due to their length of tenure within the Civil Service. They lived by the Civil Service model⁸⁶ and were rewarded for upholding a very traditional type of masculinity that prized loyalty and length of service. The Blue Suits represented the hegemonic masculinity that the New Men were countering with their new type of masculinity.

On the other end of the spectrum from the Blue Suits were the men who worked in the A-bands, who were much more casual about their jobs. Many of these men did not see themselves as doing their jobs forever; they were not interested in the same type of professional career as either the New Men or the Blue Suits but rather they enjoyed the good benefits of working for the government and the freedom of having a nine-to-five job. I worked next to two of these men at one point during my time and began to refer to them as The Footballers. They both had pictures of their favourite footballer set as their computer screen background. They spent their vacations at various major sporting events. Everyday their first conversations were about the various matches that went on the night before. Sometimes other men entered the conversation but they never asked for, nor encouraged, participation in the conversation from the five women who sat around them. One day I wore a Hibernian football team scarf into work and they both commented on it: “Oh is that your boyfriend’s scarf?” one of them asked me in a rather teasing manner. To which I replied “no” and then went into a rather lengthy discussion of the previous weekend’s match. While they (minimally) engaged with me at that time, they never pursued it beyond that interaction, regardless of when I brought up football or rugby matches with them. The Footballers were interested in keeping football to themselves; it was a way of connecting as men and maintaining a visible sense of masculinity in the otherwise feminized area of administrative work.

⁸⁶ Discussed more specifically in Chapter Six.

While there must be other types of masculinity at play in the Executive, I found that The Footballers, the New Men and the Blue Suits were interesting archetypes which brought out the differing ways men and women interacted with various masculinities. As discussed earlier, The Footballers had a social relationship with other men and a purely professional relationship with women. The women acted as if Craig were a little brother, someone to joke around with and tease for being so young, but at the same time he was held in esteem as a statistician, as someone who could get work done well, and as someone who would 'go far'. Men who fit the Blue Suit mould, on the other hand, particularly those whom Craig worked for, were not as easy with him. They questioned the way he worked (though never the final results in the time I was there) and attempted to shake his confidence in ways that often seemed like an initiation process. This made me wonder if the new masculinity that Craig represented was frightening to his superiors who very much bought into and represented the traditional Civil Servant. The Blue Suits were already in charge so they carried a legitimacy and authority with them into their relationships with both men and women, which neither the New Men nor The Footballers managed.

The prominence of the Blue Suits and their prevailing type of masculinity points to the ways that certain types of masculinity were given preference, reiterated and reinforced in the formal working process which still promotes traditional forms of masculinity in hiring, promotion and success. While there may be competing forms of masculinity at the everyday level, in reality the traditional form of masculinity based on objectivity and neutrality are what makes one a 'good' civil servant who is eligible to move up the ladder. This gendered concept regulated how men and women acted and encouraged both to conform to order to be successful. Counting the number of men and women at various levels within the Civil Service does not provide the entire picture concerning the ways men and masculinity matter. Women must constantly negotiate prevailing modes of masculinity in order to succeed. Chappell found that in Canada, "women have found it difficult to gain access to the senior ranks of the civil service because they have been seen as threatening to the status quo" (Chappell, 2002, p. 106). In the Executive, Blue Suits, the New Men and The Footballers were the gatekeepers to the different types of masculinity which women upset simply through their presence, regardless of whether or not they were feminist or equality agitators.

Therefore, men and masculinity matter. They are gendered concepts which are important in the everyday working life of the Executive. Gender is about men and the way that

masculinity impacts men and women through informal everyday interactions and the more formal structures. In the Executive, enacting a certain type of masculinity remains the best way to succeed in the Civil Service. The institutional context in which gender mainstreaming is presented is based on men and masculinity. Gendered power patterns are highlighted by the position and rank of men in the Civil Service, and seen played out through the interactions of Blue Suits, the New Men and The Footballers.

The fact that men and masculinity are still central to the context of the Scottish Executive highlights the way that masculine power is still a potent organising principle within the institution. Since women, femininity and gender are often seen as being at odds with this structural norm, policies and agendas which seem to undermine the 'rightful' place of men and masculinity are met with suspicion. Therefore, presenting gender equality policies such as gender mainstreaming must be done in a way which does not seem to attack men or masculinities. And while gender experts understand that gender mainstreaming is not an attack on individuals, this message can be lost in translation. There is a perception by some to the idea that gender equality will mean the death of men within the organisation. Thus, the intention of gender mainstreaming is often subverted as a way to stave off anticipated objections. This only further confounds the efforts to implement and institutionalise gender mainstreaming.

This section focused on actors tangentially affiliated with gender mainstreaming. The data revealed that men and masculinity matter to gender mainstreaming actors because they work within a masculine context that constantly threatens their gendered change agenda. However, this is not the only aspect of working within the Executive which prevents gender mainstreaming advocates from implementing their radical agenda. In the following section, I present data from the experiences of the Gender Mainstreaming Team that relates to obstacles they face as they attempted to implement and institutionalise gender mainstreaming.

Jumping Frogs and Tipping Points: Staff Churn and Competing Worldviews

I was sitting at my desk, when my colleague next to me pushed herself away from her computer with a sigh. She turned and asked if I wanted to get a tea from the canteen because

she just needed a break. Agreeing, we wandered down to the canteen for some tea and found ourselves sitting in one of the common areas on our floor. We started chatting and when I asked her what was wrong, she told me about the email she received asking her to go over her mainstreaming plan again with someone new on the team. She talked about how when her position started a few years ago, she and the others on the mainstreaming team had worked hard to develop a specific and targeted mainstreaming plan, with goals, outcomes and dates. But as staff changed over on the team, the momentum was lost and ‘institutionalisation occurred’ to constrict the freedom and creativity that she initially had. She pointed out that there is room in Executive for creative and individual growth if you are working with the right people, but even when that does happen it doesn’t usually stay that way. “Working here is kind of like living on Neighbours,” she said. “You know, each episode kind of runs into each other – the drama of one day is replaced by the next day’s till it all blurs together. People leave, they are replaced, but it always just kind of feels the same.”

Actors on the Gender Mainstreaming team and in the Equalities Research branch had varying perspectives on the processes of institutionalisation and implementation in the Executive. These perspectives were often a direct result of their own experiences and work knowledges about adjusting to the bureaucratic environment. In this example, my colleague was reflecting on different times in her tenure at the Executive – times when she felt supported, and other times when she felt alone in her mission to change the organisation. The data suggests that for actors actively working on gender mainstreaming and supporting gender equality in the organisation, building personal relationships and finding people with compatible worldviews was crucial to successfully implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming in the Executive. Yet, the process of negotiating bureaucratic realities often impeded actors in their attempts to implement change through mainstreaming. In this section, I explore the consequences of two barriers to the guided change agenda of gender mainstreaming – the Civil Service norm referred to as ‘staff churn’ and competing worldviews.

Staff Churn

As I will explore further in Chapter Seven, the Civil Service model is based on gendered ideals of impartiality, objectivity, neutrality, and acting as a generalist. These ideals allow the Civil Service to perpetuate sedimentary norms and ideals that unreflexively uphold and maintain traditional gendered practices. In the following chapter, I focus on how the Civil

Service model cultivates a system of bureaucratic practices which hinder change. In this section, I focus on the ways that a specific consequence of generalism – staff churn – limits institutional memory and constrains actors' ability to institutionalise gender mainstreaming. I focus on how the Civil Service, by promoting an institutionally acceptable form of change, actually maintains the status quo. I also explore data which demonstrates how the Civil Service model acts as worldview which is often in direct conflict with an equalities worldview, and how gender equality advocates must negotiate these competing worldviews within the institution.

Staff churn is the Executive's term for the high rate of staff rotation through departments. It is an accepted practice in the Executive and Civil Service and is based on the idea that civil servants should be generalists, able to work on any topic and serve at the will of the organisation. Thus, civil servants are expected to change posts every eighteen months to three years. They move both up the organisational ladder when changing posts, as well as make lateral moves to other departments and policy units. While staff churn is a bureaucratic practice that I will return to in Chapter Seven, it also has a significant impact on individuals. It inhibits their ability to form lasting personal relationships, cuts short institutional memory, and promotes an organisational acceptable form of change that dilutes the radical change agenda gender mainstreaming actors would prefer. Thus staff churn has serious consequences for the institutionalisation of radical change agendas like gender mainstreaming.

Staff churn was not always detrimental. In my time at the Executive, a number of people interested in equalities were required to change posts, but worked around the system and simply moved to another post in equalities or social research, thus staying within the area of their expertise and interest. In addition, if they did choose to leave the Equalities Unit, they would take their equalities knowledge with them, mainstreaming it even further into the Civil Service. However, my colleagues generally felt negatively about staff churn and its potential to help the mainstreaming of an equalities perspective throughout the Executive. They felt that staff churn led to a dilution of equalities expertise as those with knowledge and interest were spread thinly throughout the Executive, diluting any type of central power base that could exist. It was hard to retain productive and meaningful relationships with those who were not directly connected with the Equality Unit. Thus updating previous colleagues on new equalities measures and thinking was difficult. This presented a barrier for those active in promoting gendered change because they relied heavily on their personal contacts

throughout the organisation to agitate and promote the type of change pushed for by gender mainstreaming.

Because people moved so often, institutional memory was short and often very vague. People took their knowledge with them when they moved, which left their replacements and those staying behind with the feeling of ‘reinventing the wheel.’ Ideas that had been tried and proven not to work are re-hashed; ideas which did work are taken apart as new people attempted to make their mark. The lack of institutional memory was particularly difficult for the mainstreaming team and one person found it “a bit like banging your head against the wall” (informal conversation, field notes, 30 Jan 2007) because she felt like she was constantly doing the same thing, dealing with new people and trying to constantly emphasise the importance of mainstreaming for the Executive. The specific work knowledge that comes from doing gender mainstreaming was lost due to staff churn and it was a constant battle to make sure the momentum for mainstreaming stayed was maintained as new people came in.

Staff churn provided an institutional process of systematic change based on the Civil Service ideal that staff should be generalist workers and needed to experience change by working for various departments and topic areas. This model of change preserved the status quo and embedded norms related to the Civil Service model even further into the organisation. It ensured that individuals did not become too closely attached to their topic area and that they did not go ‘native’ and forget their commitments to objectivity, neutrality and objectivity. The promotion of staff churn as institution-approved change ensures that progressive change like that advocated by gender mainstreaming is stopped because no one is invested enough in a department, topic area or the organisation to reflect on aspects of the status quo.

Thus staff churn, through its associated consequences which promote the lack of institutional memory and a certain type of non-progressive, institutional system of change, was a key aspect of the Civil Service model which enabled the organisation to resist change.

Paradoxically, actors were prohibited from enacting real change because they were forced to change in an institutionally acceptable manner. Staff churn inhibited the possibility of transformative change as the institutionalised instability prevented the build up of expertise and systematic implementation of reform. In other words, staff churn acted as a mechanism for perpetuating the status quo. The constant movement of actors throughout the Executive allowed the institution to use smaller, less meaningful changes to prevent radical change.

Competing Worldviews

It is important to recognise that the actors involved in the gender mainstreaming agenda, both on the Gender Mainstreaming Team and more broadly as advocates throughout the organisation, negotiated a complex understanding of their work and the Civil Service. Staff churn and a lack of institutional memory hampered these actors' ability to enact radical change. Yet, even with the difficulties, many gender and equalities experts chose to stay working with equalities topics. They saw themselves as marked out as different from other Civil Servants and perceived that others positioned them as outsiders in the 'normal' Civil Service model. As highlighted in the existing scholarship on state feminism and femocrats which I discussed in Chapter One, and in my own discussions with people who saw themselves as change agents within the Executive, mainstreaming actors accept this demarcation deliberately as part of their normative commitment to the institutionalisation of a progressive change agenda. What was often ignored, however, was that the reliance on individuals with an 'outside' perspective to institutionalise change in the Executive comes with particular costs to the radical mainstreaming agenda.

These costs for equalities champions in the Executive came from the negotiation between two worldviews, one which articulated their normative appreciation for equality and social change and one which articulated their commitments to the Civil Service. My colleagues did not act on one worldview exclusively; rather they had a complex relationship with both worldviews. On the one hand, they acted from the worldview of the Civil Service and operated from the values upheld by the Civil Service model. This worldview, however, was consciously criticised as being too dedicated to retaining the status quo within the Executive. As one colleague said, "the Equality Unit has to constantly change and the Civil Service is all about not changing" (meeting minutes, field notes, 28 Feb. 2007). In response, gender mainstreaming advocates and others who worked with equalities worked from an equalities worldview, which continually questioned the status of the organisation and saw the Executive as a place which could be changed. For those committed to the equalities worldview, working around and through the Civil Service model was achieved through an active dedication to thinking about the Executive in new ways. The people I worked with in equalities were aware of the impact of the Civil Service on their work and on the organisation. Often they attempted to undermine this with a sarcastic sense of humour about their own roles. For example, during a Branch meeting, the C1 made a joke about how "we're known

for formality in this Branch” (team meeting, field notes, 27 Sept 2006) which was greeted with laughter and further jokes. The self-deprecating, yet intensely reflexive nature of this interaction suggested that the entire Branch was conspiring to work in a way that went against the ingrained formality of the Civil Service model. Another glimpse of humour came when I was passed a doctored Dilbert cartoon (see Figure 4) which showed an appreciation for the embedded norms of the Civil Service. The final frame in the cartoon has been changed from the name of the organisation Dilbert works with to read “Oh you must work for the *government*.” This highlights staff’s ability to acknowledge their surroundings and reflect on them.

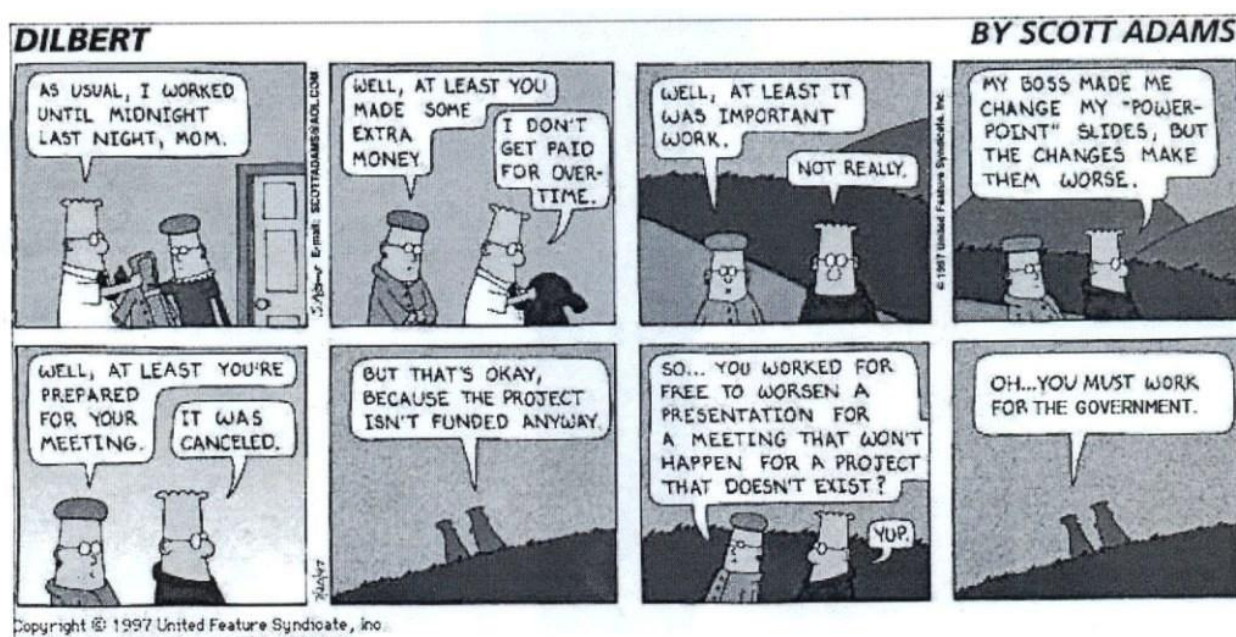


Figure 5.3: Doctored cartoon

Another way in which the equalities worldview presented itself at odds with the Civil Service worldview was in the personal relationships among members of staff. The conflation of personal and work life which I highlighted in Chapter Four was one such manifestation of this. Another way that I experienced was through participation in deliberate mentoring by other equalities advocates. I felt very strongly throughout my time at the Executive that I was being mentored by other equalities and mainstreaming experts (field notes, 20 July 2006, 24 July 2006, 9 Aug 2006, 17 Jan 2007, 21 Feb 2007) as a deliberate attempt to help me negotiate the Civil Service worldview which I found strange and off-putting. Some of this was due to the personalities of the people with whom I worked, but there was also the feeling that this was an intentional method used throughout equalities to encourage new people to the

Unit to think differently about the Executive. Building personal relationships and mentoring new ‘outsiders’ was a powerful informal norm that was used and understood in a purposive way. Connecting with others in a way that was outside of the Civil Service tradition helped gender, equality and mainstreaming advocates to subvert the traditional Civil Service norms.

There was an especially strong need to help induct people coming from activist or academic perspectives. One colleague compared the transition to what she called The Frog Story: “Working here you either jump out right away or you sit and you are boiled” (informal conversation, field notes, 12 Feb 2007). Another colleague had a theory about the ‘tipping point’ for outsiders coming into the Executive. She found that if people who came into the Executive could resist the urge to leave and stay beyond the tipping point, then they would probably make a career out of the Civil Service. In her theory, the tipping point coincided with an acceptance of institutional norms and practices which reduced individuality and encouraged a person to accept the generalist tendencies of the Executive (informal conversation, field notes, 1 Sept 2007). People with an equalities worldview often mentored their colleagues through the tipping point and beyond, and helped each other work through the difficulties of adjusting to life in the Civil Service. This deliberate coping strategy helped make working in the Executive liveable for those accustomed to a different way of seeing the world.

A third way in which those with an equalities worldview attempted to work around the Civil Service worldview was by encouraging involvement outside of the Executive. They perceived a real difference between themselves and other Civil Servants in the ways they nurtured connections to the ‘real world.’ Many of the women I worked with relied on familial roles to help keep their perspective on the world of the Civil Service. Others were involved in activist, voluntary and charitable activities which tied together their work and non-work lives. Rather than accepting the division between personal interests and work that the Civil Service worldview takes for granted, many of my colleagues instead consciously worked to bring these two together. I attended an event with the mainstreaming team in the Equality Unit that was in relation to the upcoming move from separate equality bodies to the single Commission on Equality and Human Rights. This meeting was held as a way to give community members a chance to express concerns and questions about this move with members of the Equality Unit. One of the things that struck me most was the interconnectedness of relationships between everyone at the meeting. Most people knew each other from past experiences

working together and there was fluidity among roles as people acted as government officials, equalities experts, activists and scholars.

This evidence points to a complex relationship between the Civil Service worldview and the equalities worldview. Individuals knowingly and deliberately engage with the Civil Service model and the institutionalisation forces which are constantly present. My colleagues were aware of the process and of the impacts on them personally and on women more generally. They used humour, their personal relationships with each other, and other roles in their lives to subvert some of the effects of institutionalisation by encouraging the use of the equalities worldview over or in conjunction with the Civil Service model when possible. However, operating from the equalities worldview often put them at odds with those who firmly enacted the Civil Service worldview. Operating from this perspective sometimes made it more difficult to act as an internal change agent since they often worked against their own beliefs that went along with the Civil Service worldview, or acted in ways which deliberately set them apart from the Civil Service, thus undermining their legitimacy as insiders in the bureaucracy.

Being critical of the Civil Service model, thus, worked both for and against mainstreaming. The purpose of mainstreaming is to make a routine out of the inclusion of gender issues into the structure and policy making processes of the Executive. This approach had its proponents in the Executive in people who felt that “if we presented equalities as just another thing to do, people may not get so offended by it” (informal conversation, field notes, 6 Sept 2007). They believed that the purpose of mainstreaming was to get equalities included in the Civil Service model, and the best way to do this was by making it just another system that everyone had to implement without a choice or thought about it. This way they could skip the parts of gender mainstreaming that fit uncomfortably with the Civil Service model – those parts that require subjective and critical readings of situations and policies with an appreciation of disadvantage and inequality that requires a person to act in impartial ways. Instead, gender issues would become another aspect of best practice for the Civil Service. Yet, this routinisation of gender equality does not take into account the unlikely possibility of changing the Civil Service worldview in to one more closely aligned with the equalities worldview. The Civil Service model remains an inhibiting force in the potential for mainstreaming to become institutionalised, as entrenched aspects of the model greatly limit actors’ ability to enact change. Its deeply embedded norms strongly dictate the ability of the organisation to be open or not to radical change. The point of mainstreaming is to move past trying to change

individuals' attitudes and beliefs about gender to fundamentally changing gendered organisational structures and practices. However, this is made difficult by the adherence to the Civil Service model.

Gender mainstreaming actors and gender advocates actively used strategies such as personal relationships, mentoring, humour and outside connections to work around and through the traditional norms they found working in the Civil Service. Faced with institutional change that promoted the status quo and many colleagues who subscribed to the traditional Civil Service worldview, actors involved in gender mainstreaming relied on repertoires of strategic actions to deal with their obstacles. These repertoires allowed actors to feel like they could survive in the Civil Service, even while they recognised that they were caught within an institution which was resistant to radical change. In the next few sections, I expand on these repertoires of action and address data which suggest that actors actively attempted to frame and name their mission in strategic ways. I suggest that while these strategies may have added legitimacy to gender mainstreaming and to individual mainstreaming actors, they also worked against the radical change agenda.

Strategising: Naming and Framing

I arrived back from lunch to find my boss sitting in my chair, earnestly chatting with my co-worker, pen and paper in hand. They were both taking notes as they discussed. When I walked up, my boss looked up and exclaimed "I'm meeting with the Minister! And we're trying to figure out the best way to tell him what we're doing." As I sat down with them to listen, they both began going through the various projects of the Branch, discarding some as not serious enough to be brought to the attention of the Minister and thinking about how others could be used as examples of larger points. My boss, in particular, wanted to make the point that research is an integral aspect of the policy-making process and that good policy cannot be made without the evidence to back it up. As I listened, I noted their conscious decisions to be strategic in what my boss would present. They wanted to make sure that equalities and equalities research were "taken seriously."

This was a specific case of the type of strategising work that went on constantly by members of the Gender Mainstreaming team, equality experts in the Equality Unit, and equality

advocates in social research. Although some examples of framing occur unintentionally, most occurred through very conscious efforts by those working with the mainstreaming agenda. As in this example, people chose the rationale they wanted to use in a strategic way in their presentations of their work and its importance. Using different frames for different audiences allowed them to gain traction and legitimacy in areas of the organisation where others may not have been as open to their message.

When feminist actors in the Executive argued for mainstreaming as a new way of dealing with gender equality, they advocated the feminist and radical intentions of gender mainstreaming. Yet, as mainstreaming advocates made decisions about how to present the agenda to different audiences, they often chose to downplay some of the radical claims of mainstreaming in favour of frameworks or rationales that resonated more easily with traditional Civil Service audiences. At times this occurred when they used mainstreaming to make other points, as in the example above where my boss wanted to make the larger point that policy needed to be evidence-based. Other times, mainstreaming was presented as the best option for gender equality because it was ‘softer’ than legislation (EQIA training, field notes, 1 Sep. 2006)⁸⁷. Gender equality experts sometimes chose to simplify the conceptual definitions of gender when talking with groups of non-feminists (Away Day presentation, field notes, 14 July 2006). These conscious strategies to present gender mainstreaming in a variety of ways provided a sense of legitimacy to mainstreaming advocates as they interacted with many other individuals in the Executive who did not see the value of gender mainstreaming, or who could not see how it applied to them.

Due to the masculinist bureaucratic structures of power, some frames are more likely to be employed when discussing the intentions of the gender mainstreaming agenda. At the Scottish Executive, the business case for equality was often employed to describe why equality policies are being taken on board and this was reinforced from visible, high-level advocates. Margaret Curran, Labour MSP, located the GED firmly in this discourse during a speech she gave at a conference aimed at helping representatives from public bodies comply with the GED and the EU equality agenda: “Women’s issues are important to Scotland’s economic growth” (Women, Equality and Employment in Scotland conference, field notes, 22 Jan. 2007). Trevor Phillips, Head of the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights, maintained that the equality agenda needed to be a central question of society due to

⁸⁷ This is congruent with the fashionable trend of using ‘soft’ measures as policy instruments that I discuss further in Chapter Six.

demographics and the labour market (Equalities debate at the Scottish Parliament, 23 Feb. 2007). This approach relates to evidence from the comparative literature and the knowledge that mainstreaming advocates had of these strategies. For example, in Ireland, approaching mainstreaming as a “cross-cutting issue” gives it a strategic advantage (Carney, 2002, p. 21). In Belgium, the gender mainstreaming agenda is closely tied to the discourse surrounding supranational obligations (Woodward, 2008). In NGOs in Malawi, gender mainstreaming is caught up in the development discourse (Tiessen, 2004). Capitalising on these strategies, mainstreaming advocates in the Executive also tied their discussion to frames which already carried legitimacy in the discourse of the organisation.

The data reveals that some discourses carry more power than others within the Executive, and that those in charge of promoting gender mainstreaming were very aware of which ones carried legitimacy. In the examples presented above, the equality reasoning is nested amongst larger, more powerful discourses. In the Executive, this suggests that equality reasoning is not enough of a reason in and of itself to carry enough weight to overcome the limits of the masculinised power structures. In response to this, gender advocates have strategically tied equality intentions to other discourses, which may lead to the successful adoption of aspects of the mainstreaming strategy, but at the cost of a dilution of the radical intentions underpinning the agenda.

Although having multiple frames with which to present gender mainstreaming to various audiences is useful in breaking through resistance to gender equality policies and allowing the gender mainstreaming agenda to work through the institutional context, the use by feminist mainstreaming experts of these non-radical rationalisations results in compromises of the radical intention of the agenda (Verloo, 2001; Squires, 2005b). When presented with opposing rationales for gender mainstreaming, some that are full of radical feminist undertones and some which can be seen to be doing some of the same things for women without the promise of transformational change, it is not surprising that those in charge – those implicated in and part of a system which upholds masculine power – chose an option that is less radical. This choice then dictates the future track of the gender mainstreaming approach in an organisation, making it harder and harder for feminists to reinstate the radical goals of the mainstreaming agenda. Again, because of the dynamic relationship between feminists and organisations, this does not mean they have not tried to do so, rather the way power is structured in the Executive limits the ability of mainstreaming advocates to frame the agenda in radical ways.

Strategic framing and naming were not the only techniques which gender mainstreaming experts used to promote the agenda. The data reveals how actors also consciously utilised multiple, and sometimes contradictory, methods to promote gender mainstreaming. The data from the next section shows that the use of these various methods was not a unified strategy and highlights an undercurrent of debate which is not seen in finalized versions of policy and research. Experts in the Executive debated the use of soft and hard measures of mainstreaming, although they showed a continued reliance on soft measures. They also debated the merits of advocating structural change versus informal change. The results of these debates were often based on strategic decisions about which method would allow them to move the agenda forward without destroying their legitimacy within the organisation. Yet, the data shows how this decision was not uncontested, nor did it always succeed as they hoped.

Trying Not to Use the Stick: Dilemmas and Debates

I know that there are committed individuals throughout the Executive who are working towards making the organisation a more equal place to work. But there were still times when I questioned the possibility of success for these individuals. The time I was the most driven to question success occurred when I walked by a meeting room and the entire table was surrounded by older, white guys in suits. I came back and wrote “how depressing!” in my field notebook. To me, it was the quintessential picture of what certain people in the Executive are trying to move away from, and yet to have it occur only underlined how far they still have to go.

This story describes my persistent ambivalence toward the strategies chosen by mainstreaming advocates in order to move forward the mainstreaming agenda. I chose it to set up this section which looks at the dilemmas raised by the strategies of actors promoting gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming actors compromise, debate and deliberate on the best ways to do the substantive work of mainstreaming. The data in this section uncover specific internal debates actors engaged with as they strategised to implement and institutionalise gender mainstreaming and highlights negotiations that are not revealed in official policy and research. I examine the dilemmas raised by the decision to promote change through soft measures of mainstreaming rather than towards hard, legal and required

measures (Beveridge and Nott, 2000a and 2000b). I also uncover hesitancy to move completely away from equality advocates and towards structural change. Both of these strategic manoeuvres were debated by gender mainstreaming advocates and presented dilemmas for moving towards radical change.

Soft Measures

One of the main debates which occurred among mainstreaming advocates was over the continued use of soft measures to advance the mainstreaming agenda. Soft measures include a reliance on voluntary compliance, trainings and education, and a focus on individual relationships for the promotion of shared norms and changed behaviours. Soft measures have been promoted in the Executive as a strategy to achieve the institutionalisation of mainstreaming because equality experts recognise the importance of using informal change measures to work through informal norms. However, I also found that while soft measures are necessary and important, they often worked to keep the gender mainstreaming agenda tied to the individuals who were already committed to it.

Soft measures have traditionally been the methods by which equality experts have attempted to manoeuvre mainstreaming into place within organisations (Mazey, 2002). This is due to the awareness that more direct attempts to deal with gender inequality would most likely be met with greater resistance, along with a faith in the usefulness of soft measures to do the work needed to implement and institutionalise mainstreaming policies (Liebert, 2002). This focus on soft measures was seen by change agents in the Executive as the most important part of the overall strategy for gender mainstreaming. As gender mainstreaming advocates in the Equality Unit told their colleagues “using the stick of legal responsibility to beat others into submission seems to go against the ethos of gender mainstreaming” (EQIA training session, 2 Feb 2007) which is focused on reflexive norm change. Mainstreaming seemed to be so common-sense for feminists and equality activists as a way to help move the gender agenda forward in the Executive that there was hope that soft measures would be enough to ensure the success of the policy (field notes, 2 Feb 2007).

I was not the only individual who was hesitant about the continued reliance on soft measures and there was evidence of a growing sense by my colleagues that this approach lacked legislative and political ‘teeth’ which then led to a lack of high-level support and follow

through. At the institutional level, the dependence on soft measures to promote gender mainstreaming formed a real barrier to the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. After nearly a decade of soft measures and no radical change in gender equality, there was evidence of a substantial shift towards formalising gender mainstreaming through “hard”, legal measures. The implementation of the Gender Equality Duty, the requirement for gender balanced budgets, and other formal requirements to assess progress on gender equality demonstrated a commitment by mainstreaming advocates to incorporate hard measures into their strategising as well. However, throughout my time at the Executive, soft measures were still the preferred type of policy used by both equality advocates and non-advocates in the Executive.

My colleagues recognised that soft measures were promoted as a strategy because it allowed mainstreaming advocates to bring in change through backdoor, more subversive means. They also recognised soft measures were a reaction to the double burden which mainstreaming advocates felt as they stepped gently around people’s personal politics while also attempting to institutionalise broader innovations. A consequence of relying on soft measures which my mainstreaming colleagues did not articulate however, and which I argue are a significant barrier to the institutionalisation of transformational change, is that using soft measures had an embodied cost on them as individuals. I expand on the consequences of this evidence in my discussion of bifurcation in Chapter Seven. Here, I argue that this strategy entails the use of emotional labour (Newman, 2002, p. 9) to stay steadfast and committed to the agenda. Soft measures rely on the individual to enact them. They are anchored in a bottom-up approach to ensuring guided change. Thus, they ask more of those people who are responsible to promoting them and ensuring others’ compliance with them. The data highlights the continued use of soft measures also perpetuates a continued reliance on individuals who were active in gender mainstreaming.

More countries are moving towards legislative means to support mainstreaming (Woodward, 2008) and in the UK and Scotland, the Gender Equality Duty now provides the legal backbone for ensuring compliance with gender mainstreaming practices. Although as of yet there has been little research on the effectiveness of the GED in the UK, it is indicative of the move towards using formal and legal measures to promote the gender mainstreaming agenda. The debate about moving toward hard measures is closely aligned with the debate about the use of formal and/or informal methods in gender mainstreaming. The Gender Equality Duty outlines the formal process by which mainstreaming equality is done in the Executive, but it

does not reflect the strong debate about what the best ‘tools in the toolbox’ are to promote the agenda.

Figure 5.4: Excerpt from the Gender Equality Duty, Scottish Government, 2008

Mainstreaming equality

2.3 Since 2000 the Executive has been pushing forward activities to embed equality into all its activities. Significant progress has been made in legislation, policies and practices, data collection, research and information, in the empowerment of and dialogue with communities and equality groups and in raising awareness more broadly. However, the Executive has always acknowledged that mainstreaming equality takes time and that despite these advances there remains much to be done. In 2005 we established a mainstreaming equality team specifically to focus on encouraging departments to take equality issues into account in the development of their policies and programmes and to ensure that the systems of the Executive are geared to supporting staff in this. Some examples of the progress that has been made are:

- * all internal policy briefing notes (Brix notes) now have an equalities section;
- * equality issues, including gender, are incorporated into the *Better Policy Making* guidance available to staff;
- * all Scottish Executive bills must consider incorporating an equality clause and updated guidance on equalities is provided to bill teams;
- * the *Good Consultation Guidance* includes coverage of equality;
- * equalities is included in the guidance for public bodies on Best Value;
- * business planning guidance for Executive departments highlights the need to consider equality issues; and
- * the guidance on preparation of the Executive's draft budget sets out that information on equality is required.

2.4 A number of departments, such as Health, Education and the Crown Office, have staff with specific responsibility for equality work and they have been instrumental in strengthening the equality work in those areas.

In the Gender Equality Scheme, the Executive’s approach to equality and mainstreaming is laid out and the successes of the approach within the organisation are highlighted (see Figure 5). Interestingly, the wording of this document shows the emphasis placed on both structural mainstreaming. An example is their commitment to ensuring “the systems of the Executive are geared towards supporting staff” as they incorporate equality into the development of policies and programmes and work with equalities champions, as seen in section 2.4. This is

a prime example how mainstreaming actors strategise to use both formal and informal methods to promote gender mainstreaming.

Even though there was a formal acknowledgement of the need for multiple approaches to mainstreaming, I found a tension in my colleagues' personal preferences for differing approaches. In the research branch, there was a feeling that equalities power should be consolidated within the Equalities Unit. The idea was that they should be given the ability to make change on behalf of the Executive and force compliance of the GED and other mainstreaming policies. This approach was formed around the idea of giving the experts the resources and power to ensure movement and change for the equalities agenda. While policy officers on the Mainstreaming Team may have agreed informally to this reasoning, they were responsible for executing the mainstreaming rationale put forward in official and formal documents. Thus, they were formally committed to an approach which upheld the belief that everyone in the Exec should be involved in moving the equalities agenda forward. Their participation and advocacy of institutional forms of mainstreaming ensured that this approach stayed as the official approach to equalities taken by the SE. The mainstreaming team and others in equality-related work recognised the necessity of using multiple approaches and tools to advance gender mainstreaming.

The head of the Gender Mainstreaming Team often referred to the “toolbox of gender mainstreaming” and promoted using as many tools as needed to get the job done. Borrowing this idea from the literature, she had developed a website aimed at providing outside users with the tools to do gender mainstreaming in their organisations. She and others recognised that there were many ways to go implement and institutionalise the gender mainstreaming agenda. However, the simple act of recognition had not solved the tension. They needed to figure out how to make it work effectively. They recognised the work that went with trying to fit a mainstreaming philosophy into the Civil Service model when mainstreaming should be seen as an ongoing, cross-cutting effort. As one remarked, “I want something with straight lines and square corners” (mainstreaming team meeting, field notes, 30 Jan 2007). Members of the team voiced frustration about the lack of structure to mainstreaming and equalities work in general. They wanted it to be a more outcome-focused, tangible project where they did not have to constantly feel like they were “fighting to maintain your place” (mainstreaming team meeting, field notes, 30 Jan 2007). Yet, they also negotiated personal relationships daily and relied on norm diffusion and change through soft measures of mainstreaming.

The work that mainstreaming advocates have done both formally, to tie legislative commitments to gender mainstreaming as an institutional process, and informally, through equalities champions and soft measures, highlights the complex process of implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming which advocates must negotiate. As a result, they are often faced with the double burden of pushing through institutional mainstreaming measures while also maintaining focus on the everyday realities of acting as gender advocates. The mainstreaming team negotiated this tension by using both ways to further the agenda. And while the tension did result in a double burden, it was generally deemed successful. Although members of the team did find themselves losing momentum at times, they did have tangible changes which they could point to as a result of mainstreaming. New approaches, policies and processes were in place which placed gender and equality into places where it had previously been ignored. Mainstreaming was being institutionalised. Yet, part of the reason that the team lost momentum and focus was because the success of mainstreaming was not bringing about the radical results hoped for by its advocates. The constant struggle to use the right strategy at the right time resulted in the agenda moving in fits and starts. The evidence from observing these debates demonstrates the continued importance of individual actors to the gender mainstreaming agenda as well as the results of this strategy on the radical nature of gender mainstreaming.

Conclusion

A variety of actors are important to the work of implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming. In this chapter, I focused on members of the Gender Mainstreaming team, equality experts in the Equality Unit, and equality advocates in social research. I also paid attention to other institutional actors who are tangentially associated with gender mainstreaming. Keeping an actor-centred focus in this chapter is important because it highlights the actors, strategies and dilemmas important to the gender mainstreaming agenda in the Scottish Executive.

It became apparent that focusing just on the actors who did the work of gender mainstreaming was not enough. I uncovered the masculinist nature of the Executive through observing and paying attention to other institutional actors. Mainstreaming advocates and gender experts had to work with, through and around actors who perpetuated a masculinist culture in the

Executive. They spent time and energy on accommodating the environment in which they worked. As the data highlights, this process of accommodation was complicated by staff churn and competing worldviews among the actors responsible for promoting the gender mainstreaming agenda. Staff churn – an institutionalised form of change – actually worked to prevent more transformational types of change. Additionally, the traditional worldview of many Civil Servants positioned equalities experts and gender champions as ‘outside’ of the norm. These obstacles hindered the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming.

Those responsible for the gender mainstreaming agenda recognised these obstacles and developed a repertoire of strategies to help them make their work easier. They used personal relationships with each other and those outside of the Executive to maintain a connection to activism and worldviews with which they connected. They relied on humour and mentoring to help new gender advocates assimilate to the Executive and owned their ‘outsider’ perspective as something which gave them a unique perspective on the institution. They used naming and framing strategies which allowed them to attach gender mainstreaming to wider, institutionally acceptable discourses and policy agendas. They also consciously choose to use soft measures of mainstreaming and to continue to rely on specific gender experts and advocates to promote the implementation and institutionalisation of the gender mainstreaming agenda within in the institution. What the data also indicates is that while these strategies helped actors gain legitimacy in the organisation, they often worked against promoting the more radical aspects of the gender mainstreaming agenda.

One of the most significant dilemmas which occurs due to the intentional strategising of mainstreaming actors is between mainstreaming gender institutionally and a continued reliance on individuals who fight for and are passionate about gender equality. This is not a new insight; in the early days of mainstreaming, it was argued that the inclusion of gender equality experts, “external consultants with special gender competency” (Woodward, 2003, p. 73), could help governments with the implementation of gender mainstreaming. However, it was quickly recognised that knowledge transfer from the experts to everyone else in the organisations was important. Otherwise, when the experts left, so would the gender awareness. Thus, the concept of gender and equality champions was advocated. Gender and equality champions are internal members of an organisation and are “key individuals who intervene repeatedly to advance feminist and gender equality concerns” (Chaney, 2006, p. 702). Equality champions do not necessarily have to belong to bureaucratic equality or

women's machineries or policy units, but can be located anywhere in an organisation. Out of personal conviction and interest, they make sure to involve gendered and equality perspectives into everyday debates, meetings, policies and procedures. They are incredibly important to the success of mainstreaming. However, although the work of gender champions cannot be ignored, it is also important to recognise that they can hinder the success of the mainstreaming ethos. By continuing to rely on those individuals who already possess an interest in and passion for equalities issues, the rest of the staff are allowed to continue their work without having to change. In addition, the reliance on champions continues a reliance on individuals to be aware of gender issues and work for change rather than encouraging a new focus on the institutional processes and mechanisms which are barriers to a new gender equality focus.

Internal debates also occurred about the importance of moving towards hard measures of mainstreaming or continuing to rely on soft measures to promote change. Although mainstreaming actors did not want to 'use the stick' of legal consequences for not implementing mainstreaming measures, they also were beginning to realise that radical change had not occurred through soft measures. To deal with this dilemma, they actively chose to use both soft measures within the Executive and forms of mainstreaming which were more structural in nature. They rationalised this use of both types of approaches as part of their mainstreaming toolbox, which gave them multiple ways to go about the process of mainstreaming.

To reiterate, this chapter highlighted the importance of actors in implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming in the Executive. I focused on both those associated directly with the work of gender mainstreaming and actors whose work brings them in to proximity of the agenda impact the agenda, and its capacity to invoke radical change. I highlighted strategies and dilemmas important to gender mainstreaming advocates, and suggested that paying attention to these realities for actors sheds light on the obstacles which they face and their ways of pushing beyond these barriers. In the next chapter, I move from a focus on actors to focus on the bureaucracy within which the actors work. I will pay close attention to daily practices which occur within the institution and argue that daily bureaucratic practices coordinate and connect daily action to wider relations of ruling.

Practices in Bureaucracy

This chapter examines the importance of daily practice in the institutionalisation and implementation of mainstreaming. Institutional ethnography is ultimately concerned with the coordination of people's activities and how "in a particular setting [they] can be explored and explicated" (Smith, 2005, p. 209). In my case, I substitute the term practice for activity, as it carries more relevance in relation to policy, gender mainstreaming and organisations. Indeed, Smith (2006) finds that, "practices put institutions together...[they] produce routine, standard, repeatable, and teachable procedures" (p. 143). Practices serve to coordinate and translate ideals and frameworks rooted in a different perspective into those which fit within the bureaucratic ideal. The aim is to look for practices as they actually happen and as they are shown to the researcher, either through direct observation or explained by an individual when she speaks of her work knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative that the institutional ethnographer capture those practices. Practices become the starting point for working outward toward relations of ruling. In this chapter, I explore daily Bureaucratic practices relating to gender mainstreaming in the Executive. The underlying purpose for examining these practices is to determine how they coordinate and connect action to wider relations of ruling.

I use the term 'Bureaucratic' practices, specifically with a capital 'B' to distinguish them from everyday practices which occur in the Executive. These Bureaucratic practices, instead, are practices which can be traced throughout all bureaucracies and which find their roots in gendered practices and assumptions. The reliance of the Executive on Bureaucratic practices links the Executive, as an organisation, to all other political bureaucracies where institutionalisation of Bureaucratic norms are the goals and outcomes of being part of the organisation. These Bureaucratic practices coordinate change, either from the top or from the bottom, resulting in altered and diluted forms of previously accepted norms.

This chapter builds on insights from the previous chapter, and argues that the importance of actual practice of implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming cannot be ignored. While gender mainstreaming may gain full support as a formal practice on paper, the agenda can be diverted at the everyday level, where the very people who are supposed to

encourage the radical transformation of the organisation are instead participating in everyday practices which hinder mainstreaming. I address the following questions: What models of practice are most salient in the day to day life of the Executive? How do practices specific to the Civil Service discourage radical change? Are there distinctly gendered formal and informal practices that impact the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming? What is the role of discursive practice in the work of mainstreaming experts and advocates? My institutional ethnography shows how this occurs through everyday practices related to bureaucracy. As I did in Chapter Five, I uncover these practices and suggest ways which each of them inhibit gender mainstreaming from reaching its radical potential.

I argue that an examination of daily practices shows that the gender mainstreaming approach is frustrated because it underplays the pervasive ‘stickiness’ of gender in organisational life. It becomes apparent that traditional bureaucratic practices hinder the implementation of gender mainstreaming because they are deeply wedded to the “genderedness of the organisation” (Benschop and Verloo, 2006) and are extremely difficult to change with a change agenda that attempts to mobilise the same practices in a new way. The ‘successful’ implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy would entail changing bureaucratic work practices, but the ‘stickiness’ of gender in these practices at the everyday level diminishes the potential for implementation. Implementation, therefore, often falls far short of the feminist goals underpinning a radical understanding of gender and gender mainstreaming. Instead, while the implementation of gender mainstreaming may occur, it only occurs in ways that help to uphold traditional practices, norms and values. I argue that these ‘sticky’ gendered ideals, based on bureaucratic practices, are salient to the larger goal of implementation because they make visible some concepts important to gender mainstreaming while rendering others invisible.

The Civil Service Model: Impartiality, Objectivity, Neutrality and Generalism

When I first got to the Executive, I found many things strange. For one, people’s desks were not personalized. People might have a picture or a card displayed, but little was done to make their environment ‘theirs.’ Later, after moving desks three times, I realised that this was a result of the larger issue of staff churn, where individuals move positions so regularly

that there is little reason to get too settled at one desk. I found working in an open office plan very disconcerting at first, as well, but soon realised that everyone had already worked out subtle ways to negotiate that space. Pulling up a chair meant that you wanted to have a private, professional conversation; just leaning on the desk meant that you just wanted to have a quick chat about something you were thinking about. Learning these habits was necessary to keep the working environment functional for so many people. At first I was surprised that tracking down individuals who knew about my specific project was difficult. Later I realised that this was a normal frustration for people and that institutional memory often had gaps in it. I initially raised my eyebrows when I read reports from the Executive, thinking that they all read the same. Later, when I found myself attempting to make sure my work sounded and read the same as work that came before it, I realised the power of the organisation. I am grateful for my notes from the beginning of my time at the Executive since they are invaluable resources that help me see my own institutionalisation process, even over the relatively short time span of nine months.

The Civil Service model of working upholds specific ideals which are so entrenched in the organisation that they often go unnoticed. These include impartiality, objectivity, neutrality, and acting as a generalist. Working uncritically together, these ideals help individuals and the organisation maintain its status quo as a traditional, masculine organisation. The Civil Service model is an example of how masculine power gets formed and then maintains its dominance. One of the key findings of my research was the power of the Civil Service to institutionalise, regulate, dominate and subject people to gendered concepts and ideals. The Civil Service model plays a large role in guiding people's practices. Being a civil servant requires an individual to quickly learn the power of this omniscient, omnipotent model. As one feminist civil servant said "the enculturation of the institution is what is strongest. Even people with a strong background in say, women's rights and advocacy, find it hard to maintain that" (informal conversation, field notes, 24 July 2006).

Impartiality is a central tenant of the Civil Service model. The institution does not want individual voices or opinions heard; rather civil servants need to speak for the government as impartial observers of what is happening in Scotland. Thus, mechanisms are in place to eradicate individuality. An example of this what I called "Executive speak." This term refers to when people would "Executive-ise" different work that they would do. For example, I learned to send emails in stages. First, I would write it "in my own words" saying what I wanted to say. Then I would attempt to Executive-ize it, changing words and phrases so that

they fit into the ways it “should” sound. Then I would send it to one of my colleagues (who were experts in Executive-speak) and they would look over it again to make sure that it fit the model of what a good email looked like. They would send it back to me, and finally I would send it to its final recipient. In our attempts to Executive-ise correspondence, reports and memos we fed into larger institutional norms, trying to all work within the ‘common’ language and discourses of the Civil Service. Executive-speak was an example of the text-work-text process which institutional ethnographers pay close attention to⁸⁸ because it was a process which coordinated my actions with institutional and bureaucratic norms and ruling relations. My voice, the personal voice that may have chosen certain words or phrases over others, or may have framed the email in a particular way to highlight a point important to me, was subsumed to the prevailing Executive-speak.

I kept note of my own enculturation into the institution and learned this process through listening and watching my colleagues as they attempted to Executive-ise their own interactions, both on paper and in person. Interestingly, many others were also fully aware they were participating in the model. At times, it almost became a game. For example, people were required to work with a new online filing system even though they found it bureaucratic and annoying to use. While they grumbled and explicitly complained about the way the Executive was trying to make them fit in, most people did switch. However, one person decided that she would name her files after colours, rather than in the ways specified by the system, and each colour would remind her of the person the file was about – so people she liked were her favourite colours, people she thought boring were khaki and beige, and people she did not like were black (branch meeting, field notes, 9 August 2006). Her naming system was her way of maintaining a bit of her personality in the face of what was supposed to be an impartial system, designed to erase individuality.

Another example of Executive-speak was the ubiquitous phrase ‘catch-up.’ This was used to describe an informal meeting where the parties involved could sit and talk about any issues, without the pressure of a formal meeting. While informal in nature, catch-ups often resulted in formal outcomes or set the scene for more formal procedures. Having a catch-up was Executive-speak for participating in networking activities without having to use formal procedures and rules. Catch-ups were also used to maintain informal and friendly relationships with others in the Executive, thus keeping personal connections. Using the term

⁸⁸ See discussion in Chapter Three.

‘catch-ups’ Executive-ised the process by which people bypassed systems that worked to deny personality and impose a standardised sense of impartiality to the organisation.

Executive-speak was not just about reinterpreting personal words and actions into the Civil Service model but also about the Civil Service providing staff with the right templates. In one discussion, my boss explained to me that I would have to get over my academic fear of ‘plagiarism’ because reports and documents in the Civil Service were built upon previous work, almost to the point of cutting-and-pasting any new information into documents which had been successfully used in the past (formal interview, interview notes, 22 Jan. 2007). For example, to ‘write’ research reports, people take the templates of reports that have worked before and insert their own findings. The report looks the same and fits the template, ensuring that individual findings, regardless of their possibly radical nature, fit into the Civil Service model. While there was the possibility of using this practice to ‘smuggle’ in new and radical ideas since the document conveyed the feeling of impartiality through looking and feeling the same as past documents, I never observed anyone using this strategy.

The ideal of impartiality is complemented in the model by Civil Service ideals of objectivity and neutrality. Civil servants are expected to approach their work as objective and neutral, resisting any type of subjectivity or impartiality. In the Civil Service Model, ‘good’ civil servants stay away from party politics, and serve the government in power regardless of their own personal beliefs. I encountered this ideal very early on when I participated in a staff Away Day. One of the activities was to decide what kind of animal you would be based on a variety of values, then to decide what kind of animal the division should be based on the same values. The values included impartiality or advocate; generalist or specialist; pragmatism or ideals; rigour or speed; strategic or responsive. We were instructed to place ourselves individually on a sliding scale between the ends of the spectrums and then work in teams to come up with divisional attributes. My team consisted of a male statistician and the male head of the division. I found myself on almost complete opposite ends of the spectrum from both of them – I was an advocate where they were impartial; I believed in specialism while they argued for generalist knowledge; I was an idealist rather than a pragmatist. In the end, we laughingly agreed that I was new to the Civil Service and thus could be forgiven my non-traditional beliefs. However, the implicit assumption was that I would change my values to match theirs the longer I stayed in the organisation.

Lastly, the Civil Service model is predicated on the ideal that civil servants are generalists. Along with being impartial, objective and neutral, an ideal civil servant should be able to work in any division or department where he or she is posted. The assumption is that generalist knowledge can be applied anywhere throughout the organisation, thus allowing procedures and processes to be followed in the same way regardless of the specific content of the job. I discussed the embodied aspects of staff churn in the previous chapter. Here I elaborate on its consequences for everyday practice in the Executive.

Broadly, managers and branch heads had to deal with staff churn as a procedural problem, since people came and went and posts were left unfilled for long periods of time. More specifically, equalities experts voiced real concerns about the ability of generalists to learn and act upon the specialist knowledge involved in making decisions about equalities, as well as the problem of recruiting equality experts only to require them to switch jobs every three years. Staff churn was a serious problem for those interested in equality. On the one hand, teaching generalist civil servants the nuances of equality work was time consuming and resource heavy, especially if the person found the topic too far outside of the traditional realm of Executive work. In one case where this was true, the person left after only eighteen months on the job. On the other hand, gender experts generally joined the equalities research and policy teams with a purpose; they were often hired with an academic or activist background with specific interests in particular areas of equality work. The fact that they were required to change posts and focus on topics that were not of their direct concern prohibited many experts from joining the Civil Service or from staying. Thus, dealing with the generalist expectation that is the norm for civil servants was difficult for persons in equalities.

The question this raises is about the usefulness of the generalist mentality inherent in the Civil Service and the possibility that it may hamper equalities work and/or other cross-cutting issues which require specialist knowledge. I heard a story from someone working with mainstreaming about a friend of his who worked in IT in Saughton House⁸⁹ but wanted to get into policy work so he transferred to head up the Social Inclusion policy team. However, after six months he went back to IT because the cross-cutting nature of social issues were “too fluffy” and “at least IT had yes and no answers” (mainstreaming team meeting, field notes, 30 Jan, 2007). The agreement by others to the moral of this story – that equalities and social

⁸⁹ One of the other buildings of the Scottish Executive, generally seen as out-of-the-way, run down and not the best place to work. It was home to many of the more administrative departments.

justice departments work against the grain of civil service departments which are used to working independently – highlighted the general feeling that working as a generalist across departments was incredibly difficult. There was no institutional structure in place to help the mainstreaming team deal with hostility about changing the ways work was normally done, nor was there a structure in place to help the recipients of mainstreaming projects work through these barriers.

These ideals of impartiality, objectivity, neutrality, and generalism are powerful norms in the Civil Service. Importantly, they are enacted as gendered practices which often go unnoticed by those who advocate them. This allows for the continued entrenchment of these practices into the genderedness of the Scottish Executive. One way which gender ‘sticks’ to the organisation is through the mobilisation of texts which enter, influence, coordinate and standardise people’s experiences. Research documents, memos, emails and other written artefacts from the Research Branch and the Equality Unit ‘produces for the institutional participant ... a standardizing vocabulary, subject-object structure, entities, subjects and their interrelations, and so forth’ (Smith, 2005, p. 108). In the Executive, various texts coordinate work across departments and the work of writing a document becomes a practice which translates the radical ideas of gender mainstreaming into acceptable bureaucratic values.

The existence of the Civil Service model sheds light on why implementation often fails in its’ transformational goals. Bureaucratic practices of impartiality, objectivity, neutrality and generalism are all practices which encourage the organisational status quo. These practices subsume the personal and active voice, routinise thinking, and promote the good of the organisation over specific participative-democratic goals. These practices are part of the larger overarching ethos of the Executive, and thus gender mainstreaming gets implemented in relation to them. The more radical practices promoted by the mainstreaming agenda, such as reflectively thinking about policy and policy outcomes, questioning the gendered assumptions of research questions and statistics, or finding new ways to promote women’s interests, contradict the core practices of the Civil Service model and are thus much harder to implement. The pressure of conforming to entrenched Civil Service practices causes the mainstreaming agenda to be reshaped during its implementation into something less radical and more in line with the prevailing genderedness of the Executive.

The Civil Service model does not only manifest itself as practices which translate to a specific set of gendered norms within the Executive. It can also be seen in structural practices which

pervade the organisation. As I will demonstrate in the next section, the structure of the Executive, specifically the reliance on hierarchical practices, greatly impacts the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. Since hierarchies become a structuring context in which actors practice, the Bureaucratic practice of working within strict hierarchies undermines work done by gender mainstreaming advocates. The Executive's dependence on hierarchy become a constraint on equality and gender mainstreaming practice as that work tends to be cross-cutting and aimed at breaking down traditional hierarchies. In the next section, I examine this practice and further suggest the importance of paying attention to 'the people upstairs' when examining practices important to gender mainstreaming.

The People 'Upstairs': Executive Hierarchies

I had my first meeting with someone from the policy branch. We met in the canteen, a neutral, safe place to have meetings. We got organic tea and sat down. I was interested in talking to her because she had been important in setting up the initial web site that I was now responsible for revising and I wanted to hear her opinions on the way it should go. I also knew that she was a key colleague working for gender equality and mainstreaming, thus I thought it would be a good chance to talk with someone who had thought about the issues in which I was interested. In a wide-ranging discussion that covered topics ranging from the potential to be objective as a civil servant to questioning why women preface their opinions with the word 'sorry' in meetings, she dropped a comment that would stick with me. "The best way to get stuff done here," she said, "is to have Ministerial backing."

Executive hierarchies provide a structuring context in which practices play out, and which shape and condition practice. In the Scottish Executive, hierarchies support a gendered structure of power, with a specific type of masculine power perpetuated at the top, that then works itself down. One of the strongest hierarchies that I found was Minister: Policy: Research. A Minister's wishes greatly organise the working life of both Analytical Service Divisions and policy units. A Minister can push through ideas and policy, or hold them back. Thus, the importance of having Ministerial backing is constantly articulated. In the equalities landscape, having a Minister with a portfolio which specifically includes equality issues was central to pushing mainstreaming and other equality policies through government. As has been highlighted in the literature, having strong political and bureaucratic will in the form of

top-down support is a precondition for successful mainstreaming (Council of Europe, 1998; Mackay and Bilton, 2000). A Minister's priorities are the ones which trickle down to the policy and research teams.

The relationship between a research team and the policy unit they work with is a complex one. In many ways, it should and can be a fruitful working process where the evidence produced by the research branch supports and is used to inform policy. However, this is not always the case and those in research often voiced some discontent with their policy colleagues. Researchers were encouraged to see their policy colleagues as consumers and asked to think about the policy process and how evidence could inform it. Yet, there was a feeling that policy colleagues were not expected to think about research or evidence. My research colleagues often felt that they were on the bottom of a hierarchy and therefore their work was devalued. For example, researchers provided comments on drafts of policy but felt like their colleagues in the policy unit "won't do anything with them. They'll just ignore them" (informal conversation, field notes, 9 Jan. 2007). Other times, researchers felt that colleagues in the policy unit signed off on plans, but did not commit to them or changed the plans without consultation. Policy colleagues, on the other hand, strongly adhered to the idea that they answered to the Minister. Thus, a hierarchy played itself out whereby researchers answered to policy colleagues who were then responsible to Ministers. Physically this was confirmed by the fact that the policy teams for many of the social research teams were located on a different floor; thus the idea of doing things for people 'upstairs' was literally the case. This hierarchy was important to the mainstreaming strategy because it highlights a flaw in the mainstreaming process which presupposes expert knowledge and research evidence, but disregards the organisational reality of the policy making process.

While researchers complained that they are allowed access to only a small part of the policy context, which was 'parcelled down' to them by their colleagues in the policy unit, this can also be advantageous. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, members of the Equality Unit felt like their colleagues in the Equality Research Branch had more time and freedom to reflect on policy, research and personal development issues since they were not tied so directly to the policy cycle. In the Equality Unit, working patterns and schedules were often interrupted and put on hold when Ministerial tasks had to be given priority. Members of the Equality Unit were aware of their place in the hierarchy and saw it as their responsibility to let research colleagues know what was occurring at the Ministerial level, keeping them aware of changes in Ministerial focus and importance.

Subtle, everyday practices between the Equality Unit and the Equality Research Branch perpetuated the hierarchy. Members of the Equality Unit dressed up more than the researchers, wearing suits versus more casual work clothes. When I asked about this difference, I was told it was because policy people were more often asked to go to Parliament or deal directly with Ministers and thus needed to be suitably dressed. There was a constant sense of urgency in the Equality Unit and I always found that people spoke quicker in policy meetings than in research meetings. Another example of the subtle hierarchy was when members of the Research team were told second hand of an event at Parliament about the state of equalities in Scotland. My colleague was very annoyed that she had not been informed and invited. As she said, “We are Equalities research. We care about this too!” (informal conversation, field notes, 21 Feb, 2007).

Another hierarchy that was present in the Executive had to do with competing cycles. There was an agreement by both policy workers and researchers that research cycles and policy cycles do not run at the same rate. Thus, those in the policy units must operate at the whim of politics from the Scottish Parliament, which often does not give enough time for the researchers to provide tested, methodologically sound evidence. As one policy colleague told me “Ministers want answers now. They want to know if funding this project or that project will turn the tide on youth crime or racial discrimination or whatever and they want to know that now. They don’t want to wait to find out what the research says. And sometimes they don’t want to know anyway, if it’s not the right answer” (informal conversation, field notes, 17 Jan 2007). Thus, those involved in research committed to providing strong, well tested evidence were sometimes left scrambling to find a quick answer. This resulted in a strong feeling of dissatisfaction among research colleagues because they felt a professional commitment to providing sound research and evidence. Gender mainstreaming was understood in the Research Branch as a radical, evidence-led process. This contrasts with the traditional hierarchical, political and unpredictable policy making process. Expert knowledge is not valued in most policy making processes. Thus, the explicit engagement with evidence and consultation that the mainstreaming approach calls for does not fit well with the traditional institutional arrangements for policy making with which most people in the Civil Service are comfortable with and regularly use.

Lunch time conversations were an interesting time to hear uncensored ideas about hierarchies that impacted the women with whom I worked. One conversation revolved around the

reasons that they were not told important information that impacted their everyday working lives. In this particular case, they discussed why they had not been told that their boss who went on maternity leave would not be replaced by a full time C1, but instead would be a part-time C1 who would share the responsibility with the C2 in charge of the entire division (lunch conversation, field notes, 6 Feb. 2007). The explicit reasoning was that no one really knew who was in charge of the departments or who signed contracts and this lack of knowledge simply filtered down. Implicitly, however, there was an understated critique of those in charge who decided that Equalities Research could be headed up by a part time-person. This was part of a reoccurring resentment by members of the Gender Mainstreaming Team in regards to the fluctuation of numbers within teams. Various C1s worked hard to increase the number of people working for Equalities Research, only to have their efforts constantly undermined due to staff churn.⁹⁰

During another lunch time conversation, we tried to figure out the Civil Service grading system. It seemed no one really knew what the system was, especially at the higher levels of the Senior Civil Service (SCS). One person laughed it off, saying “once we get into SCS levels, I don’t really need to know” (lunch conversation, 27 Feb. 2007). The implication was that she would never get that high so there was no need to know how the system worked at that level. A general laughter by the women at the table at this comment caught my attention as the implicit agreement was that none of them would be going on to higher grades in the Civil Service. These women recognised that they would not be willing to give their lives to the Civil Service in order to rise through the ranks. Whether this was because they did not have personal aspirations to do so, or because they recognised the barriers to success – motherhood, patriarchy, long hours, the willingness to participate in political manoeuvring – I did not find out. However, I found the conversation helpful in illuminating their attitudes about the Executive models of hierarchy.

While the above examples are evidence of hierarchy, they can also be seen as evidence of gendered patterns of power where masculine norms, ways of doing things, or seeing the world are evident. The reliance on Ministerial support is a particular type of work process that maintains and encourages specific gendered patterns of power. While it is true that the majority of Ministers are men, it is more complicated than that. Being male does not mean you cannot support issues central to women (and being a women does not mean you will).

⁹⁰ Yet another example of the consequences of staff churn discussed here and in Chapter Five.

Rather, I suggest that the Executive model of hierarchy is a manifestation of gendered power patterns where masculine methods, language and actions are promoted and expected. In the Equality policy unit, which deals more directly with upper-levels of power in the forms of Parliament and Ministers, there is evidence of traditional manners of dress, speaking and acting. In the Research Team, conversations concerning staffing and promotion highlight gendered patterns where women and equalities issues do not have the power to retain salience on upper-level agendas. Attitudes by women themselves suggest that being in positions of power seems out of their reach or not something they are interested in, leaving it to others more interested in working through masculine ways to attain power.

These hierarchies are manifestations of gendered power patterns which continue to sustain traditional ways of working in the Executive. They are part of the institutional context in which gender mainstreaming works and are important in dictating norms concerning decision making, resource flows and the acceptance of new policy ideas. Hierarchies predicated on masculine values work to channel power in traditional ways, effectively keeping those with power in power (Chappell, 2002). Clinging to old ways, not only do elites stay in power, but traditional norms and ways of working also maintain their place in the hierarchy. Thus, hierarchies effectively stop the introduction of new ways of working and new ways of looking at things. They dictate the flow of power, and thus become the focus for decisions about how to spend time, energy and resources. Integrating gender mainstreaming into the traditional hierarchies within the Executive becomes an exercise in compromise. Those implementing the policy must decide which way to best portray the agenda so that they introduce some new ideas without upsetting the flow so much that it shuts down all attempts at reform.

This all points to a picture of gendered power that has important implications for people interested in change within the Executive. The unreflexive acceptance of hierarchical practice both creates, and is created by, the existence of masculine power in the Executive. Masculine power still forms the base of power in the Executive. The data shows ways which Bureaucratic practices restrict the ability of actors to act, build and agitate on behalf of gender mainstreaming. However, these practices do not occur just at the institutional level. Important individual practices also provide the context within which mainstreaming occurs. The next section examines gendered practices specific to everyday work.

Disjuncture: Gendered Ways of Working

My boss was meeting with the Minister today. She was excited because it meant that she would get a first-hand look into the policy cycle, which she and the other researchers often felt left out of, or at least on the fringe of. She was going to present some of the results of research that was done to mark the 100th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. So first she checked her emails to make sure that she had all the information from the policy unit, then she went over her notes to make sure she had what she wanted to say, then she crossed the aisle and sat down between my desk and that of my co-worker and began to talk through what she was going to say. Using the verbal feedback from my colleague and me, she amended and polished her comments until she was comfortable that they both represented what she wanted to say and that they would fit into the discourse appropriate to meeting with the policy team and the Minister. I thought this was completely appropriate and enjoyable – it is always nice to get feedback and to work through ideas out loud. But, what was most noticeable about the whole process was that she was the only C1 to go through it! The other C1s – all men - were meeting with the Minister as well but none of them went through this process of ‘talking it out’ with their colleagues.

People’s ability to implement gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive was directly related to practices which take place every day throughout the organisation. Some of these were formal practices and others were informal, but all could be seen through a gendered lens. These practices were gendered because either men or women made up the majority of people who participated in them. In addition, they were gendered because they structured relationships and interactions between men and women. These practices impacted relationships between men and women, and influenced the way that work got done within the Executive. I hesitate to suggest that essentialist ways of acting, working and knowing existed in the Executive without bringing up an appropriate critique of the ways gender as practice is shaped and mediated through wider social norms. Yet, the ways many women I encountered worked were qualitatively different from the masculine norm that pervaded most male individuals and the masculinised culture of the Civil Service. This way of working focused on connecting with individuals on personal matters before moving to work matters, and it relied on verbal communication to work through and sort out problems.

As seen in the story above, my female boss talked out her ideas and problems, relying on her colleagues to support and challenge her as she prepared for a big meeting. At other times, my female colleagues supported each other as they dealt with the double burden of working and home life. In many instances, I noted the ways the two were wrapped up in each other. For example, one morning my colleague working on gender mainstreaming was having a conversation with a woman who worked in another research branch. They were discussing work-related topics but the discussion was interwoven with a thread about how my colleague was tired because she had been up all night with her young child, and how she was not sure she had the energy to visit her ill mother over the weekend and take care of both. The woman from the other branch took the time to reassure her about her home life before she went returned to the work topic. This was not an uncommon occurrence among the women with whom I worked, but in this instance I noted it because at the same time these women were having this discussion, two of my male colleagues' conversation was about going out for birthday drinks at a friend's house (observation, field notes, 28 July 2006). Their conversation was not about work at all; rather it was a completely social discussion. Instead of the melange of work and home life that peppered many women's conversations, the men I worked with tended to be much more specific in their exchanges – it was either about work or it was about not-work.

This example is typical of gendered practices in the social world at large and seen in other organisations. What I want to discuss here is the lack of resistance that people, on the whole, showed towards these practices. Both women and men were generally content with these practices; the women I worked with received support and satisfaction from the ways they worked. For example, from my first day onwards, I ate lunch with a group which consisted of women almost exclusively. They were predominantly other B-band social researchers from across the division. Some members of the group saw each other outside of work, but generally it was a group formed out of common, work-based experiences as young-ish, working, social researchers in the Civil Service. Lunch discussions often revolved around babies, home redecoration projects, and caring for aging parents, interspersed with general comments about work and the division. When men joined the group as occasionally happened when tables were full in the canteen, the discussion was much more work focused and forced. Generally the men would dominate the conversation; everyone would touch base briefly about their home lives, but then the men would steer the conversation back to work or more general issues, such as politics and sport. The next day, the relief would be almost palpable as the women re-gathered and caught up on issues which were missed during the previous day's lunch.

Connell (2002) suggests that gender practices and relations are developed in childhood because people find a pleasure in gender learning and take an active role in learning gendered practices (p. 78-79). My evidence suggests that those promoting gender mainstreaming have not thought through the ways that individuals find pleasure in practicing traditionally stereotypical gender activities, nor the consequences for this on the 'stickiness' of gendered practices. I found that many of the everyday gendered practices at the Executive could easily be classified within stereotypical gender roles, but women and men found participating in gendered practices to be both conscious and enjoyable. Thus, there was little reason for people to want to change the practices, even if they upheld relationships and structures which might have changed through gender mainstreaming. As Acker (2004) argues, "we may have failed to take adequate notice of pleasures as we have considered the role that emotions and gender identities play in organizations" (p. 30). The challenge here is that successful implementation of gender mainstreaming might change practices which people perceive as positive and enjoy taking part in.

Observing everyday, informal practices such as talking with colleagues about non-work issues uncovered important gendered relationships which structured ways of working in the Executive. Examples like talking out problems, sitting with only women at lunch, and mixing work and home issues point to ways that men and women work and know about their work differently. I do not mean to suggest that men never worked in the ways that women did, or vice versa. In fact, I constantly looked for times when these everyday practices were reversed or undermined. However, the relative rareness of this happening and the fact that there was very little resistance to them suggests that gendered practices are deeply embedded in the ways that people work and that most people are happy with these practices. Thus, implementing gender mainstreaming, which focuses on changing everyday practices, is difficult. The implementation of the agenda must work around and through practices which people enjoy and use for support.

Beyond these material everyday practices of working, there was significant evidence of discursive practices which also hindered the radical agenda of mainstreaming. The everyday practice of conflating terms around gender, equality, and feminism is not unique to the Executive, but it has a special significance for institutional ethnography data as it highlights the importance of paying attention to language and the ability of words to coordinate bureaucratic practices and norms.

The Executive Has Addressed Gender Issues, Right?:

Semantic Slippage

I was asked by the person responsible for knowledge transfer to give a presentation on my work to others in my area, the idea being that I was there to study the Executive for my own work, but also to give them feedback on what I was learning and thinking. One of the things I found so interesting about the presentation was that I constantly referred to gender as I understand it academically – as a social construct that is fluid and dynamic and more about structural relationships between men and women than about the actual sexed bodies of women. As I presented about mainstreaming, equalities and what I was finding, one of the members of the audience who I would call a ‘typical’ C-band, career Civil Service man became upset. He confronted me on my “academic” outlook about gender, asking for confirmation that “the Executive has addressed gender issues because we now had it on statistical surveys and it was part of the vocabulary of the institution.” When I proceeded to make a point about the differences between sex and gender, he was not appeased. I got the feeling that he was affronted – after all, here was a man who had struggled to make the change to gender but was now being told that it wasn’t enough and that it was far more complex than simply replacing the word ‘women’ with the word ‘gender.’ I am not sure I ever completely made my point to him, and a subsequent conversation with a feminist colleague helped me realise that I probably affronted him as both an outsider from the Civil Service and as a feminist academic. Yet, his clear confusion as to why he wasn’t being told ‘well done’ for taking on the language of gender without understanding the conceptual shift in that direction spoke to me of the deeper tensions that arise from this issue in the Executive.

The discursive practice of conflating terms important to the mainstreaming agenda makes it hard to implement a clear idea of mainstreaming and leads to confusion on the part of those not intimately involved with the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming uses and advocates a certain set of terms which come with normative overtones, but these often get diluted in the everyday practice of translating gender mainstreaming to a wider audience. Thus, important ideas of feminist and radical change get lost. As I demonstrate below, the widespread perception that the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ are interchangeable often renders the feminist thinking inherent in gender mainstreaming invisible. The definitions of gender and sex in the Scottish Executive are muddled, confused

and not clearly delineated in everyday practice. My experience was that while those implementing gender mainstreaming have a clear idea of how they want these terms to be used, this has not been translated effectively into the everyday practice of the organisation.

The ways that the term ‘gender’ is used in the day-to-day workings of the Scottish Executive – often as a substitute for the variable sex or when only talking about women – rarely has an overt and explicit connection to feminism. I argue that this is a reflection of the Executive’s commitment to the Bureaucratic norms which make up the Civil Service Model and can be explained using insights from into the so-called ‘equality/difference’ debate in feminist literature. Proponents of equality value a liberal commitment to gender-neutrality based on the idea that sexual difference ought to be irrelevant in consideration for access to full human rights (Scott, 1988; Squires, 1999). This liberal commitment to equality as gender-free and neutral is the default perception in the Scottish Executive, and it is within this understanding of gender and equality that gender mainstreaming advocates must work. While feminist agitators and gender mainstreaming advocates continue to engage feminist debates over equality/difference encouraged by conceptions of diversity and its role in government policy, the organisation remains wedded to an equality approach which has been “founded upon patriarchal gender priorities” (Squires, 1999, p. 124).

A comprehensive understanding of gender did not translate to members of staff in the Executive who were not directly linked with the work of the Equality Unit or the Equalities Research Branch. For example, I spoke with statisticians who were proud of themselves for adding gender-disaggregated statistics to the national surveys that they undertake on a regular basis. And while gender-disaggregated statistics have been an important goal in the implementation of gender mainstreaming, the use of the term ‘gender’ instead of ‘sex’ as a variable does not connote a change in practice towards a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances of gender. In this instance, gender was a synonym for sex, used only because it was seen as a more polite or neutral term. These types of statistics are important and were brought about through feminist advocacy within the organisation as an essential way to monitor the experience of women in Scotland. However, in the conflation of gender and sex, a liberal idea of equality remains the default position of the organisation.

Therefore, a clear disconnect of meanings is played out in everyday settings. The meaning of gender, sex, women, women’s issues, and gender issues have different meanings for different people. This has implications for policy and research decisions made in the name of ‘gender.’

The Equalities team, both in policy and research, were knowledgeable about what I came to understand as the ‘academic definition’ of gender and were able to express specifically what they meant when they said ‘gender.’ Their understandings were rooted in an acknowledgement of difference and diversity perspectives and focused on the ideas that gender was about men and women, structural relationships between men and women, social norms and changing those norms to ensure equality for both sexes. Yet, they did not believe equality or the policy of gender mainstreaming to be gender-neutral; indeed, their understandings of the strategy of gender mainstreaming were in line with feminists who view it as a strategy of displacement (Squires, 2005b).

This is complicated by the fact that it is hard to mainstream the feminist understandings surrounding gender mainstreaming. It is difficult to translate these into tangible policy outcomes. The very idea of gender is complex and perhaps more easily understood and debated in academia than in the policy world (see for a good discussion Beckwith, 2005). Policy makers and civil servants may lose something politically when they acknowledge the fragmentation of women’s issues and groups. In addition, from a practical point of view, the implementation of technocratic practices related to gender mainstreaming is more doable for non-experts. These practices do not ask them to re-think their approaches to policy in substantial ways. The point, for example, of the EQIA was that non-equality experts could fill out the assessment without having to do much thinking about gender issues or policy. Implementing check-sheets, putting together Gender Equality Schemes or focussing on gender-disaggregated statistics allow non-experts to feel like they are achieving the goals and requirements of gender mainstreaming. It is much more difficult to encourage people not invested in gender equality or the mainstreaming agenda to think about and actively change their embedded and enacted gendered practices, or to move the organisation away from its dependence on a liberal equality perspective.

While gender mainstreaming advocates within the Executive are aware of these issues, they found a real problem when others began to pat themselves on the back for ‘including gender’ without understanding what that means and how it can impact women and their specific issues negatively. There were “times when gender is actually about women, and times when gender is actually about gender and if people are not being clear about which is which, then women’s specific issues and goals get lost” (personal conversation, field notes, 22 Nov. 2006). There is still great political salience in the idea of women as a group and of women with sexed bodies who experience life differently than men; this can get swept under the rug

when the focus is shifted towards gender. In the shift to include men because they are part of gender, issues specifically important to women get lost. For example, in the *Gender in Higher Education* (Scottish Funding Council, 2006) report published during my time at the Executive, evidence highlights the increased number of female participants in and graduates from higher education but the focus shifts to the fate of men in this swing, ignoring the continued wage-gap that occurs once women have left university. Because of this increased reliance on a discourse of gender that is stripped of an understanding of how relationships between men and women are structured through hierarchies of domination and subordination and the structural oppression of women, civil servants in the Executive run the risk of forgetting about women-specific issues and policy.

The lack of a distinctive feminist discourse in the Executive can be linked to the decreased visibility of overt feminist actors and feminist rhetoric. As discussed in Chapter Two, gender mainstreaming in Scotland came about in conjunction with equalities mainstreaming more broadly. Thus, many feminists dedicated to gender equality specifically have broadened their focus to engage with multiple equality strands and with equality mainstreaming broadly. In the Executive, both policy officers and researchers discussed the implications of the upcoming transition away from separate equality commissions to the combined Equality and Human Rights Commission. They debated whether or not this move would dilute feminist goals and feminist actors' ability to focus specifically on gender-related topics. The implications of the continued reliance on people to institutionalise gender mainstreaming were more thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter, but it is important to highlight here the consequence of this move in relation to the practices of gender mainstreaming. The shift towards equalities mainstreaming has resulted in a related dilution of the salience of explicitly feminist practices.

This is not a blatant move, but can be seen, for example, in the conscious absence of the word feminism in internal training sessions, presentations, and many official documents relating to gender mainstreaming. In one clear example of the subversion of overtly feminist language, I observed a civil servant laboriously changing the word 'feminism' to 'gender' when editing a PowerPoint presentation from one which had previously been used with civil society groups to one which would be used for an internal presentation. She was aware that her audience at the Executive would be more comfortable with the terminology of 'gender' and would therefore be more open to the feminist ideas she was presenting if she used that language. This is evidence of 'feminism' being discriminated against and left out of the internal

discussions within the Executive. Feminist goals and claims are foreign concepts to many Civil Servants partly because the ideas of feminism oppose many of the norms of the Civil Service Model. This is clearly understood by equalities advocates; therefore they maintain a practice of using language which portrays ideas that have more legitimacy within the organisation.

In a clear example of how this semantic slippage impacts the work of gender mainstreaming advocates, the final documents related to the recent Gender Equality Scheme and the Gender Audit of Statistics (See Figures 1 and 2), went through edits where concepts associated generally with feminism such as awareness raising, dialogue and communication, along with traditionally feminist policy issues such as the pay gap, occupational segregation and childcare provision, became couched in broader gender equality language. Although the Gender Equality Scheme had gone through the gender mainstreaming process, the overtly feminist nature of the document became hidden within language that fits more comfortably with the organisation. The practice of using ‘acceptable’ language results in a slippage from radically feminist language to language which reflects the status quo.

Our work on gender equality sits squarely within the context of our Equality Strategy and our commitment to mainstreaming, underpinned by dialogue and communication, developing research and statistics, and awareness raising. By providing a clear framework for action, the gender equality duty will help to drive mainstreaming, increase the pace of delivery on the work already in progress and make improvements in the lives of men and women in Scotland. (Scottish Executive, 2008)

Figure 6.1: Text from *Scottish Executive Gender Equality Scheme 2008-2011*

The Scottish Executive aims to promote gender equality through its gender mainstreaming approach, co-ordinated by the Scottish Executive Equality Unit. All the Scottish Executive's general policy objectives, such as those which aim to develop the economy, improve access to education and educational attainment, prevent poverty, improve health, reduce crime, improve the quality of homes, and provide an efficient integrated transport system, have gender implications, given gender differences in experiences and behaviours and given persisting gender inequalities. In addition, the Scottish Executive has specific objectives which promote gender equality such as the reduction of the gender pay gap, encouragement of flexible working, tackling occupational segregation, and increased childcare provision. (Scottish Executive, 2007b)

Figure 6.2: Text from *A Gender Audit of Statistics*

In the everyday discursive practice of gender, equality, sex and feminism, the data points to ways that multiple meanings are made, maintained and promoted at the local level of the organisation. The implementation of gender mainstreaming is meant to alter these practices, make people more reflexive about their everyday practices, and advance the use of more gender equal practices. At the same time, gender mainstreaming promotes the advancement of women and women's issues because these are issues that have hitherto been marginalised in practices and policy process. These policies have been gender blind and gender biased in the sense that the status quo has traditionally worked in favour of male interests and masculinist norms which are presented as neutral and universal. Gender mainstreaming works to counter the institutionalised disadvantages in the system through an understanding of 'gender' that moves beyond equality-as-gender-neutral. Implementing this agenda relies on an advanced understanding of feminist goals, gender issues, and women and politics which most people in the Executive do not have and that are completely outside of the Civil Service model. It is a specialist knowledge that remains with gender equality experts and individual feminist agitators and does not get mainstreamed beyond them.

Different meanings of gender and of equality in play within the Scottish Executive and the impact of those (mis)understandings are important to the practice of gender mainstreaming because they dilute the message that advocates of the gender mainstreaming agenda are trying to implement. The conflation of 'sex' and 'gender' not only dilutes more complex understandings of gender but, as a practice, it also obscures the final goal of mainstreaming as a policy which attempts to address a wider social goal and move forward discussions of

equality into ones which take seriously the ideas of difference and diversity. Instead, this conversation is constantly hindered by everyday practices which pull the conversation back to comfortable organisational understandings of equality and sameness. These dilute and routinise the promises of the gender mainstreaming agenda. As Burns (2005) points out “politicians often seem unable to find words when faced with gender issues” (p. 138) or, as in the case of Executive, the words provided to them do not do justice to the complexity of gender issues.

Conclusion: Bureaucratic practices

There exists dynamism between practice and the continued entrenchment of a particular ‘genderedness’ in the Scottish Executive. This masculinist, hierarchical, and gendered sense of the Executive is reinforced through daily, unreflexive practices and semantic slippage. Bureaucratic practices such as these are the actual activities which happen on a day-to-day basis that do the work of coordinating the transformation of change agendas into the institutional status quo.

In the Executive, enacting Bureaucratic practices requires individuals to accept normative ideas about what it takes to be a ‘good’ Civil Servant. Thus, the work knowledges of those who do Bureaucratic practices revolve around the best ways of maintaining impartiality, objectivity, and neutrality. They require that people know how to maintain a generalist focus that concentrates on procedure and process rather than specific and intimate knowledge of an issue or area. This type of work knowledge is different from the work knowledges of gender mainstreaming advocates. Gender mainstreaming advocates have an intimate knowledge of the ways they work and why they work the way they do. They are aware that they Executive-ise their documents and language, that they frame their work depending on the audience, and that they talk about different things at lunch depending on the gender makeup of who is sitting at the table. Their work knowledges revolve around the difficulties of putting into practice complex ideas of social justice and gender, providing them with an in-depth knowledge of the topic. These work knowledges set gender mainstreaming advocates apart from those who continue to use traditional Bureaucratic practices as the basis for their everyday working practices. They are different because they speak two languages, operate from multiple worldviews, and juggle competing work knowledges. There is a reflexive acknowledgment that the organisation is “in two minds” (Bilton, 2005). In addition to being

set apart, this type of work knowledge is also not given as much credence as more traditional work knowledges. In order to succeed in the Executive, it is still better to enact Bureaucratic practices than gender mainstreaming practices. Thus, gender mainstreaming advocates must work especially hard to maintain their credibility as both agents and Civil Servants. Because Bureaucratic practices are still the 'best' practices, change agendas which aim to change these practices are subordinated and diluted.

Bureaucratic practices of the Civil Service form a wide web of relations around the individuals looking to implement gender mainstreaming and force them to work within, among and around an institution that is grounded in maintaining the status quo. Competing with these powerful Bureaucratic practices are the practices associated with gender mainstreaming, which include reflexive, gender aware practices designed to make everyone in the organisation associate policy outcomes of equality with the policy making process. In the Executive, gender mainstreaming practices are rooted in the idea that policy making needs to take into account differences among people, and corresponding belief that the outcome of policy making should ensure a more equal society. These beliefs require different practices than those traditionally enacted in a bureaucracy.

These new and non-traditional practices involve looking at processes from a social justice framework. For example, people must think about how policy impacts others differently or recognise that people have differing levels of social capital. Other gender mainstreaming practices include relying more on consultation, thinking about policy from the perspective of those impacted by the policy, and seeing change as a positive outcome. Gender mainstreaming practices differ from Bureaucratic practices in that they require reflection on how the individual making decisions about policy is implicated in that process, ask questions about gender stereotypes and try to not take gender for granted. In the Executive, people doing gender mainstreaming attempted to work across divisions and departments, took into account organisational practices and processes as important in the work of policy, and consciously organised their work practices to be more fair and equal. Because this is antithetical to the Civil Service model, advocates have attempted to dilute the radical aspects of this agenda through the use of seemingly neutral and technocratic institutional practices which are more appropriate within the Executive.

Organisations are not static entities, and practices within them are rarely permanent. Change does not usually bring with it a complete transformation from one system to another. Rather

practices, meanings and dynamics overlap, emerge and get re-negotiated in complex ways (Newman, 1995, 2005). This is seen in the process of implementing the gender mainstreaming agenda in the Scottish Executive. New practices aimed at reconfiguring the policy making process to be more gender equal interact with old practices which re-inscribe the status quo. However, the data shows that the resistance to practices associated with gender mainstreaming is deeply entrenched. This is connected to the ways that some civil servants continue to uphold the organisational belief and reliance on less than 'modern' concepts. This is seen in slow moving compliance, overt refusal to address gender issues, subtle complaints about HR measures to increase diversity in the organisation, and the passing off of gender and equality tasks to gender advocates or experts. Gender mainstreaming strategies have yet move the organisation and people within it beyond Bureaucratic practices and are, therefore, facing strong resistance in the daily practices of the Executive.

In the Executive, I named specific Bureaucratic practices which continue to frustrate the gender mainstreaming agenda. These include an unreflexive adoption of the Civil Service model, gendered work knowledges, and the layering of new names and frames over dominant practices. I also argue that practices associated with gender mainstreaming compete with everyday practices associated with being a 'good' Civil Servant and are thus viewed with suspicion. Thus, gender mainstreaming advocates have adopted 'more trustworthy' technocratic tools to regain legitimacy within the organisation. This allows their practices to be translated from radical into acceptable so they are able to move forward with the policy, but they are also left with a diluted set of practices which do not fulfil the promise of gender mainstreaming.

What Happens to the Radical Potential of Gender Mainstreaming?

Throughout the last three chapters, I have paid special attention to the reasons why radical gender change has not occurred in the Scottish Executive, even after the adoption of gender mainstreaming policies and practices. It becomes apparent that there is a problem with the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. This problem – that the adoption of the gender mainstreaming agenda has not resulted in radical gender change within the Scottish Executive – is the focus of this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to provide a relevant analysis of gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive and synthesise the findings discussed in previous chapters. Throughout the chapter I refer back to previous examples and discussions in the thesis, and elaborate on their importance in understanding why gender mainstreaming has not succeeded in radically transforming the Scottish Executive or the wider policy landscape.

I argue that there are four main elements that are most influential in this process of non-transformation. The first is the paradox of institutionalisation. Gender mainstreaming seeks to change the institution from within. However, the processes by which it becomes institutionalised involve co-option, adaptation and dilution of its radical potential. The second aspect of the problem is that radical work gets translated into what institutional ethnographers call regulatory frames during the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. This is done through the coordinating mechanisms of the Civil Service model and bureaucratic practices. Thirdly, fossilised norms continue to play a significant role in the problem, acting as institutional barriers to radical change. Lastly, a process of bifurcation happens to those affiliated with the radical change agenda. Equalities experts and mainstreaming advocates become split between their civil servant and equalities roles. This leads to a loss of efficacy, burn out, turnover and embodied consequences on gender mainstreaming actors. This chapter integrates many of the insights from the previous chapters and relates them to the larger question governing the research – what happens to the radical potential of gender mainstreaming?

As seen in Chapters One and Two, gender and equalities mainstreaming is considered the next step in gender equality policy because of its espoused potential to radically transform the policy making process to better ensure more equal policy outcomes. In a little over a decade, the policy of gender mainstreaming was adopted by a wide variety of political organisations throughout the world and has been expanded to include other types of equality mainstreaming efforts. Feminists developed the policy framework explicitly as a change agenda which emphasised institutional processes and practices in an attempt to move the locus of the responsibility from individuals to institutions. However, individual gender mainstreaming advocates continue to bear the brunt of responsibility for successfully implementing the policy. My data indicates that individual advocates promote gender mainstreaming and work to implement and institutionalise the approach within government in order to realise its radical potential. However, they face everyday obstacles which frustrate and limit the potential for transformational change. The everyday experiences of working within the limits of a bureaucratic Civil Service model circumscribe advocates' ability to effect radical change as they are forced to dilute mainstreaming in order that equalities work is seen to 'fit' with the organisational status quo.

Pressure for change does not only occur from endogenous sources. Exogenous pressure also plays a part in the process. Gender mainstreaming is not only an in-house change attempt; it was developed in direct relation to external, international pressures. These pressures are related to ideas of good global governance and global equality policies. As also shown in Chapters One and Two, the equalities mainstreaming agenda in the Scottish Executive was developed as part of a global diffusion of policy ideas advocating mainstreaming as the latest policy instrument for tackling gender inequality. Gender and equalities mainstreaming grew out of international commitments and declarations and the diffusion of good practice by the wider UK government, and through the auspices of the EU and the UN. Thus, there was a top-down effort which impacted the processes of institutionalisation and implementation.

Chapters Five and Six discuss the data I collected from my institutional ethnography in the Scottish Executive. Each thematic chapter introduces evidence of the ways that gender mainstreaming advocates have attempted to work through barriers by mobilising targeted strategies. However, as I argued, each of these strategies did not resolve the problem of how the transformational potential of the gender mainstreaming agenda might be achieved. In Chapter Five, I focused on actors importance to gender mainstreaming in the Executive. I examined their role and continued importance in the process of moving the change agenda

forward. As I demonstrated, the successful institutionalisation of the gender mainstreaming approach would move the onus of responsibility away from individual equality actors by making it a routine aspect of policy making. Because equality actors have encountered resistance to this they have purposively promoted methods to make gender mainstreaming more approachable for non-equality or gender experts. However, this leads to only a partial institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. This unexpected need to continue to rely on committed, willing, and compliant actors hinders the successful and full institutionalisation of an approach which looks to move beyond those already invested in the project of gender equality.

In Chapter Six, I provided evidence of everyday practices in the Executive which reflect the pervasive ‘stickiness’ of gender and illustrated the tension of attempts to implement a radical change agenda built on traditional bureaucratic practices. Practices tied to the Civil Service model, hierarchies, gendered ways of working, and semantic slippage effectively inhibit the promise of gender mainstreaming. These practices result in the implementation of a diluted version of mainstreaming that does not carry with it new or radically changed organisational practices or values. By concentrating on the everyday level of implementing gender mainstreaming at the Executive, I show why the status quo is so ‘sticky’ and why it is so hard to change. From the data, a picture begins to emerge which shows how the goals of gender mainstreaming are confined, restricted and reframed by the everyday practices of bureaucracy. The institution responsible for gender mainstreaming’s radical change efforts is also responsible for the lack of success in attaining those radical goals. Analyzing the everyday implementation of a change agenda like gender mainstreaming sheds light on how practices at the daily level do and do not transform and institutionalise change.

I argue that there is a process which happens at the institutional level where change agendas get transformed into something which the institution can accommodate. In this way, there needs to be attention directed to “the significance of institutional dynamics in order to explain policy change [because] the political administrative system is understood [to be a] key variable for policy change in individual states.” (Lindvert, 2007 p. 13-14). In the next section, I suggest that the change agenda of gender mainstreaming is limited by certain institutional paradoxes which cannot be avoided. I then discuss the impacts of regulatory frames, fossilised norms, and bifurcation on the radical potential of gender mainstreaming.

The Radical Potential Paradox

A paradox presents itself in a self-contradicting or contradictory way. It is a situation which ends in contradictions or tensions that expose themselves as competing rationales. Paradoxes can often be used analytically to examine apparently contradictory statements and to draw conclusions which either reconcile or explain the presence of the contradictions. I suggest that the theoretical underpinnings of gender mainstreaming are full of paradoxes. Specifically, I examine what I call the paradox of institutionalisation, which refers to the de-radicalising process that occurs when a process or practice becomes institutionalised. It is closely linked with the paradoxical way in which the institution uses its own processes of routinised organisational change to stifle the chance of the more radical changes promised by an agenda like gender mainstreaming. I argue that uncovering these paradoxes provides a framework for better understanding why the implementation of gender mainstreaming is limited in the Scottish Executive. Using the concept of the paradox allows me to discover tensions and contradictions in the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in the Executive.

I find the most intriguing aspect of gender mainstreaming to be the paradox of radical institutional change relying on the inherently de-radicalizing process of institutionalisation. Certainly, I see how gender mainstreaming is a logical continuation of other forms of policies and legislation aimed at increasing gender equality. It makes sense that if attempts at changing individuals leave institutional barriers intact, then feminists need to focus on structural obstacles to equality and feminist engagements. The gender mainstreaming strategy then has the potential to incorporate both individual and institutional change, promising a radical revolution in the way policy is made and executed. Yet, I also recognize the tensions in using the process of institutionalisation to implement radical change. As demonstrated by the literature on gender and organisations, institutions where gender mainstreaming is introduced are already strongly gendered places. Thus, in order to be successful in already gendered organisations, those committed to gender mainstreaming must contend with the strongly institutionalised and gendered barriers already in place. Paradoxically, in order to change their practices, actors in an organisation must be reflective about their practices. However, bureaucratic institutions by nature are places where practices are taken for granted.

Inhetveen (1999) recognises the paradox of institutionalisation in her study of the institutionalisation of gender quotas in German and Norway. “What happens,” she asks, “if people want to change what is taken for granted in society?” She responds in relation to gender quotas:

In this case, they have to change routines, and this implies: they have to take action, which is the very opposite of an institution. Moreover, they have to change other people’s routines and patterns of taken-for-grantedness. Of course, one can change the behavior patterns of other people, but one cannot force or rationally persuade them to take a new pattern of behavior for granted. To enforce behavior patterns by means of sanctions, rewards and arguments contradicts the very characteristic of institutions, that is, their taken-for-grantedness. Efforts in external motivation of taken-for-grantedness seem paradoxical. (p. 407)

We see from her work that Inhetveen (1999) answers the paradox of institutionalisation by focusing on culture as the key factor for institutional innovations’ ability to gain acceptance. She finds that the effect of the innovation must correspond with a culturally accepted goal, and that the mechanism of implementing the innovation also has to be based on cultural patterns of values (p. 414). She defines a process whereby the innovation has to start with formal rules, then can become taken-for-granted only if it is not constantly contested. When the innovation is closely tied with cultural values in an institution, it has more chance of not being contested and of succeeding in the institutionalisation process. She concludes that gender quotas can become institutionalised in the right political context (p. 416). However, I believe Inhetveen underplays the ‘stickiness’ of traditional ideas about gender which permeate political and state organisations and bureaucracies. Evidence from my study suggests that while advocates certainly work to maintain the ‘fit’ of gender equality policies in the wider institutional status quo, these policies have yet to become normalised and everyday in the life of the organisation. . Gender equality policies and their ‘fit’ must be actively maintained by gender advocates because other members of the Executive do not see them as congruent with Civil Service culture or the ‘ways things are done’. Thus, even though the radical nature of policies associated with gender equality gets transformed, paradoxically even these policies which seem to ‘fit’ do not actually become taken-for-granted.

This transformation of radical notions into those which represent the status quo is in many ways directly linked to institutional practices which favour incremental change over radical change. Examples of such practices in the Scottish Executive include the commitment to the

Civil Service model and staff churn. These practices institutionalise a particular type of acceptable change which does not address the status quo per se, but does eliminate the possibility of radical change. By accepting small changes brought about through routinised organisational change such as the enforcement of the practice of staff churn, the institution maintains a semblance of commitment to change. Staff members change jobs, they alter their focus, and are forced to adjust to new job situations. These small, daily, and sometimes inconsequential changes serve to compromise the radical change promised by gender mainstreaming. The organisational commitment to routinised change ensures that members of staff use time and resources to manage them leaving little space to contemplate and act on radical change. Thus, paradoxically, by supporting some forms of change, transformative change is lost.

The results of the paradox of institutionalisation limit the potential for radical change in an organisation because they provide a constraint on the possible outcomes of change. Any process which attempts to become enculturated must incorporate traditional institutional mandates, cultures, and norms which are already present. In order to become accepted and institutionalised in the organisation, the process necessarily undergoes some sort of transformation. In the case of gender mainstreaming, a strategy which attempts to reorganise gendered principles upon which the policy making process is built, the entrenched values surrounding gender, sex and the category of woman are particularly 'sticky'. The role that the "genderedness of organizations" (Benschop and Verloo, 2006) plays in diluting gender mainstreaming goals cannot be underestimated. It presents a formidable obstacle to the institutionalisation of radical feminist goals.

In summary, what I call the paradox of institutionalisation is evidenced by my everyday examination of the process of doing gender mainstreaming at the Scottish Executive. An understanding of the limitations that are consequences of this paradox helps explain why gender mainstreaming continues to fail in its promise as a radical change agenda. An examination of this paradox highlights the parameters within which the gender mainstreaming agenda and gender mainstreaming advocates must work. Understanding the consequences of gender mainstreaming as paradoxical suggests that part of the reason why the radical potential of gender mainstreaming has not been fulfilled is because of the tensions which emerge as advocates attempt to implement and institutionalise a radical change agenda within an organisational setting dedicated to maintaining the status quo. An examination of the paradoxes of mainstreaming does not provide a complete answer to the radical potential

problem, however. In addition to being aware of the consequences of paradoxes, it is also important to investigate the practice of transformation, and to better understand how everyday practices get translated into institutionally acceptable ones. The next section argues that using tools from institutional ethnography can help with this analysis.

Regulatory Frames

This section highlights the ways that regulatory frames, coordinating mechanisms and fossilised norms limit the practices of gender mainstreaming and thus its' radical potential. As discussed in Chapter Three, within the institutional ethnography framework, Smith discusses the role of regulatory frames as a way to help understand the contradictions in organisational practices⁹¹. Regulatory frames are “discursive procedures that organize how something is to be interpreted” (Smith, 2005, p. 227). They are analytical tools which help the researcher make the connections between everyday practices and relations of ruling. They are significant because they provide a way to understand the seemingly contradictory practice of selective incorporation of everyday actualities into institutionally acceptable realities. There is a process which occurs within organisations whereby “the work of fitting the actualities of people’s lives to the institutional categories that make them actionable is done at the front line. The categories...are governed by and responsive to frames established at a more general level” (Smith, 2005, p. 199). Regulatory frames are the wider discourses in which everyday experiences are translated. They are the result of everyday experiences being transformed into institutionally acceptable categories and frameworks. In the Executive, this refers to how experiences surrounding the implementation of gender mainstreaming which are firmly founded in equalities norms, practices, and worldviews get articulated and framed within the Civil Service model and worldview.

This translation, the articulation or framing, occurs with the help of coordinating mechanisms which facilitate the shift from the everyday actuality to the institutional regulatory frame. Coordinating mechanisms provide the institutional link between everyday actualities and more general relations of ruling. One of the reasons that regulatory frames are so powerful is that they are built upon the foundations of gender ‘realities’ or ‘normalities’, those norms and practices which are considered to be ‘the way things are’ in relation to gender in an

⁹¹ This is a different way of understanding frames than I highlighted in Chapter Five.

organisation. These practices very often go unnoticed and unquestioned because they share many of the same features as the wider gender order in society (Connell, 2002, 2005a) and thus are invisible in the regulatory frames as well.

These can be seen in the practices of the Scottish Executive which continue to reproduce a masculinised culture and way of doing things. The ways of the Civil Service, with their tendencies towards masculine ideals of objectivity, neutrality, impartiality and generalism frustrates the equalities worldview, with its focus on change, subjective realities, and reflexive practices. Coordinating mechanisms and regulating frames add to the analysis by highlighting the *process* by which aspects of the gender regime get embedded at the institutional level of the organisation. Mechanisms and frames ensure that non-traditional norms, practices and processes get translated into traditional practices which support masculine power and culture. Through the processes of coordination and translation, mechanisms and frames also help support the prevailing institutional status quo by providing sometimes intense resistance to change. Thus, change agendas like gender mainstreaming must work against the genderedness of the organisation (Benschop and Verloo, 2006) that is seen in the coordinating mechanisms and the regulatory frames.

Fossilised Norms

In their article exploring whether or not gender mainstreaming can escape the genderedness of organisations (2006), Benschop and Verloo identify ways that gender mainstreaming attempts to rectify “existing – fossilised – gender norms and routines” (p. 29). By that, they mean that

gender mainstreaming transcends the liberal feminist approaches of equal treatment and equal opportunities for it addresses fossilised norms and complex power relations rather than reproducing simple notions of disadvantage. (p. 31)

Their findings point to ways that gender mainstreaming has been successful in opening up discursive spaces of organisational change in the Ministry of the Flemish Community in Belgium. They claim that the gender mainstreaming strategy can transform the genderedness of an organisation by making people question fossilised gender norms and routines and through making fossilised gender blind and gender biased attitudes more visible (p. 29-30). The concept of ‘fossilised norms’ is a useful way of describing one of the coordinating mechanisms in the Scottish Executive because it highlights the capacity of an organisation to

maintain outdated norms in the face of agendas promoting change. However, while I agree with Benschop and Verloo that gender mainstreaming does attempt to rectify fossilised norms, I argue that the continued salience of these norms within organisational life is actually one of the main barriers to gender mainstreaming. Benschop and Verloo underestimate the ‘stickiness’ of these norms in the bureaucratic setting, and do not recognize the paradox inherent in attempting to implement a policy which is focused on changing fossilised norms by utilizing the same norms. Thus, I am taking their idea of fossilised norms further by highlighting the resilience of these norms in the ‘sticky’ genderedness of political organisations.

Fossilised norms are so persistent because they dictate action in the Executive while at the same time providing meaning for those actions. Thus, they also act as coordinating mechanisms. In other words, they become a way that change gets coordinated back into something the institutional status quo can reference. As I discuss next, fossilised norms such as a commitment to gender-blind policies, personal politics that do not include gender equality and the continued existence of patriarchal norms work against the institutionalisation of new, more progressive norms. They have a strong normative presence that must be accounted for when explaining the minimal impact of gender mainstreaming on organisational cultures and practices.

My research highlights reluctance by many in the Executive to recognize that gender inequality is still a ‘real’ problem. Many in the Civil Service prefer to believe that the ‘gender problem’ is already solved. To use Connell’s (2006b) terms, there is “gender denial” and a sense of “gender elsewhere” (p. 446, 448). This is seen when Civil Servants not focused on gender mainstreaming and equalities pointed to the number of women in Parliament, to the increased number of women in the Executive, and to specific policies and programmes which target women as proof that gender concerns have been dealt with. In addition, many preferred to assume a gender-blind outlook, which glossed over the gendered nature of the organisation through the assertion that gender is not a relevant perspective through which to approach policies and practices in the Executive. The denial of the gender problem reflects both bureaucratic norms which pervade the organisation and the feeling amongst gender advocates that gender continues to be ignored by many in the organisation. The reliance of individuals in the Executive on gender-blind principles reflects a larger trend in government and society to view gender as having been effectively dealt with and no longer an issue. It is a persistent

myth that makes it easy for people to ignore the gendered nature of systems, organisations and practices.

My findings resonate with other analyses of gender and public organisations. This type of gender-blindness is a situation found in various political organisations (Itzen and Newman, 1995; Stivers, 2002). It is a result of the fossilised norm of ‘objectivity’, which I have connected to the pervading masculinisation of bureaucracies in Chapter One. I also found evidence of it in the power of the Civil Service model to translate equality intentions, practices, processes and norms into institutionally acceptable ones (Chapter Six). In her study of public sector organisations, Connell (2006b) found that “for much of the time, across much of the public sector, gender is regarded as a non-problem” (p. 444). Her study highlights how people perceived gender issues as problems in the past or elsewhere in the present. Connell connects this with “movement towards the goal of a gender-neutral workplace” (p. 447). This goal of gender-neutrality often ignores or makes invisible real gender issues still pertinent to the daily life of the organisations, and re-centres gender problems away from being organisational and back towards prejudiced individuals (p. 445). Connell claims that an organisational ‘gender denial’ and sense of ‘gender elsewhere’ is “partly produced by looking out from a state agency where gender neutrality is assumed (rightly or not) towards a social world where gender neutrality is very definitely not a reality” (p. 448). This fits with my own findings which highlight the fossilised assumptions of objectivity and neutrality as salient and highly regulatory cultural norms. This reliance on gender-blindness allows people not interested in gender mainstreaming to maintain their distance from the agenda. By believing and acting as if gender were a non-issue, they are not forced to question their own beliefs and working practices. The denial of gender as a system which underpins relationships, actions and practices allows civil servants to stay ‘objective’ within the confines of the Civil Service model and to continue to function without needing to question the core working norms upon which the system is built. The practical result of this is that it allows people ‘to get on with their jobs’ without questioning the assumptions upon which their jobs are built.

As I have pointed out, while the Executive is a highly gendered organisation, this often goes unrecognized in the daily actions of many of the staff. Instead, many continue to act as if their own personal experiences and politics are ‘dropped at the door’ when they come to work. They rely on a fossilised norm which does not recognise personal gendered practices as salient to the political life of the organisation. The norm is that ‘good’ Civil Servants are objective and neutral, and do not bring their personal politics to work. Therefore, in the

bureaucratic system personal political practices, including ones around gender, are rendered invisible and ignored. Evidence of this norm is seen in the double burden that individuals working on the mainstreaming agenda carry as they negotiate both personal and institutional politics. However, while many Civil Servants subscribe to the idea that they should be impartial and objective, and that they should separate their personal politics from their work life, the reality is that personal politics structure many people's everyday life at work. For example, when the men around me talked football but left me out of the conversation, their personal gendered beliefs about what women and men talk about was brought into the workplace. No one questioned that women would be responsible for sending around birthday cards or that men would make up a greater number of statisticians than women. Attitudes towards gender and gender inequality are not generally perceived to be personal politics, unless an individual makes clear that politics are involved.

This is not surprising; many feminists have pointed out ways that personal and private beliefs about gender spill over into work and public areas (Heiskanen and Rantalaiho, 1997; Martin, 2006; Newman, 2005). Yet the vehemence with which people adhere to the idea that personal politics do not impact work done in the Executive is perhaps a good indicator of just how entrenched the belief that 'the personal is not political' is within the organisation. The lack of attention paid to the ways that personal politics operate within the organisation means that some people are not aware of gender issues, others ignore them, and some may actively work in opposition to gender equality. Many people's personal politics do not include heightened gender awareness, and thus thinking about gender in the ways asked for by gender mainstreaming is difficult. Most tend to just gloss over it, leaving the radical potential of mainstreaming unfulfilled. There is little discussion in the Executive of how social mores seep into the organisation and not much reflection on how people's personal politics may impact their work. As Martin (2006) explains, "to be reflexive about gender entails the thoughtful consideration of one's options and following through with actions that one intends to produce" (p. 260) This entails an awareness of the ways that a person's personal beliefs are part of the options of professional life. Instead, in the Scottish Executive, the prevailing assumption is that Civil Servants do not come to work with personal agendas and politics. This hides the ways that personal politics do get involved and makes invisible the existing structures and practices of domination and subordination which are always at play in the Executive.

In contrast to this fossilised norm, norms associated with gender mainstreaming push the boundaries between the personal and political, the public and the private. The norm of personal politics remaining 'gender free' relies on fossilised ideas about a strict demarcation between the public and private spheres. Gender neutrality is seen as normal and necessary to public life, while gender is viewed as an aspect of the private world. There have been efforts to alleviate some of the obvious distinctions between the public and private spheres in the Executive, as seen through family-friendly policies and flexi-time. However, the gender mainstreaming agenda is designed to push these boundaries even further through a reflexive, subjective and conscious strategy to revise structural processes, practices and policies. Unfortunately, the boundaries which gender mainstreaming advocates are attempting to push against are policed by the organisation. Newman (2001), in her discussion of New Labour's approach to managing change in the public services, discusses "strategies in terms of their capacity to constitute *self-regulating subjects*" (p. 94, italics in the original). She found evidence of organisational behaviour that translated external regulation into a variety of internal forms of management and control. Newman articulates how external pressures and regulations were incorporated into organisational practices whereby workers self-regulate themselves (p. 95-103). She argues for

the capacity of these discourses and practices...to constitute 'self regulating' organizations and actors. They produce particular forms of calculation and control within organizations and prioritize particular forms of judgment and action. They have the capacity to produce shifts of power with organizations. (p. 168)

By advocating strategies which encourage individuals and the organisation to police themselves, the state then takes part in acts of boundary-setting. Relevant to attempting gender mainstreaming strategies in the Executive, the idea of self-regulating subjects and a boundary-setting organisation helps explain the process by which the Executive continues to police and maintain those gendered boundaries between the public/private or the political/personal which gender mainstreaming and other change advocates are attempting to re-negotiate.

The consequences of boundary-setting and self-policing for the individuals working on gender and equalities mainstreaming are that their attempts to re-negotiate the boundaries place them in suspect positions within the organisation. They become illegitimate because the work they are doing is not aligned with the boundaries that are set within the Executive. Their work is denigrated. This causes them to become defensive and to utilize strategies which translate the normative agenda into something which the organisation finds acceptable.

This translation carries bodily consequences for mainstreaming advocates, which I address further in the following section on bifurcation. It also helps explain why mainstreaming advocates turn to technocratic tools as a way to implement the strategy. These technocratic tools give them organisational legitimacy and allow them to bolster up otherwise ‘suspect’ activities

Lastly, the ‘sticky’ gendered nature of the Executive is upheld through the fossilised norm of patriarchy. Patriarchal practices and norms are still an everyday part of working life at the Scottish Executive. My research documents ways in which sexism still operates at the everyday level in the organisation (Chapter Five). Like in many other organisations, sexism may not be as overt as it once was, but patriarchy is still a force which must be recognised and dealt with before gender mainstreaming can fulfil its radical promise. There has been a recognition that the concept of patriarchy has a tendency towards biological determinism and can be used in a way that ignores the experiences of women of different classes, races and sexualities. Yet, those who work with patriarchy as a concept (Colgan and Ledwith, 1996; Walby, 1990) find patriarchy a “useful tool in describing and investigating female oppression” (Colgan and Ledwith, 1996, p. 17) especially within organisations. I concur with this stance, as patriarchy is a conceptual tool which helps me explain the persistent sexism in the Executive and to better understand power within the organisation. To use patriarchy, there does not need to be an “assumption that gender is everywhere the same...all we need to assume is that significant linkages do exist” (Connell, 2002, p. 110). For my work, patriarchy is a short-hand way (Cockburn, 1991) to explain “the primacy of the male norm” (Hirdman, 1990, p. 79) which still demonstrably exists in the Executive. For example, sustained masculinised power, hierarchies and the competition of masculinities in the organisation are all forms of patriarchal power which structure and determine the everyday experience of women and men, and thus influence the way that gender mainstreaming is considered and done within the Executive. Many everyday working patterns, such as those seen in Chapter Four can also be attributed to the fossilised norm of patriarchy.

Connell (2002) argues that “patriarchal power normally operates through the routine functioning of the institutions in which the dominance of men is embedded” (p.145). This is demonstrated clearly in Chapter Five, where masculine power is shown to be resilient and strong, even as new masculinities have begun to change the face of that power. Chapter Six suggests that working practices and knowledges continue to reinforce stereotypical gendered patterns of working and knowing. The world views inherent in the Civil Service model

shown in Chapter Six are also a manifestation of the masculine that is embedded in the Executive. The dominance of patriarchal power remains a significant barrier to gender mainstreaming efforts in the Scottish Executive. The establishment of new norms which attempt to undermine the fossilised aspects of patriarchy must occur in the face of very strongly held routines and institutional beliefs.

This section analyses Benschop and Verloo's concept of fossilised norms and elaborates specific examples from the Scottish Executive's attempts to implement its gender mainstreaming agenda. By taking seriously the idea that fossilised norms have concrete consequences on the radical potential of gender mainstreaming, I argue that fossilised norms work as coordinating mechanisms between strategies aimed at change and the status quo of the Executive. They serve as the guideposts by which any new norms are measured. The introduction of new norms is always seen in relation to the fossilised norms; they are coordinated with the fossilised norm. The difficulty of introducing new norms in the organisation is compounded when these new norms question the very beliefs and attitudes upon which the fossilised norms are built. As seen in the Executive, fossilised norms rely on traditional, patriarchal views about gender which make them even more solid and unchangeable. Thus, the introductions of new norms which the gender mainstreaming strategy proposes challenge the existing power base in the organisation (Newman, 2001) and are therefore viewed with suspicion and resistance. In this way, fossilised norms limit the potential for radical change by the gender mainstreaming strategy.

In summary, further analysis of Benschop and Verloo's idea of fossilised norms indicates that by taking seriously just how important they are to the 'stickiness' of traditional gender norms in organisations, they help us better understand one of the reasons that gender mainstreaming has not fulfilled its radical potential. Gender-blindness, a traditional distinction between the personal/political and private/public, and patriarchy are examples from the Scottish Executive of fossilised norms which frame the institutional context. Through self-regulation and boundary-setting, these norms maintain their dominance in the Executive and act as the guideposts for new norms. Recognizing the salience of gendered fossilised norms to the continued existence of a specific institutional context sheds light on one way that radical change agendas like gender mainstreaming get diluted.

The previous section identified the institutional role that paradoxes play in limiting the capacity of mainstreaming advocates to promote change and suggests that uncovering

fossilised norms helps shed light on the radical potential problem. In addition, the data reveals a third aspect of the radical potential problem which poses a significant barrier to actors as they implement and institutionalise gender mainstreaming. The next section will discuss the concept of bifurcation and its role in hindering mainstreaming advocates from successfully implementing and institutionalising radical gender change through mainstreaming.

Bifurcation

Campbell (2006) and Smith (1987) use the concept of bifurcation as a way to understand how people deal with two competing worlds of discourse and to highlight the work that people go through to negotiate these worlds so they can function in both, even if the discourses are competing. The notion of bifurcation revolves around how people may make sense of their work knowledges in “two distinctive, and often contradictory, ways” (Campbell, 2006, p.95). In her work on nurses, Campbell (2006) suggests that there is a disjuncture between the world of bodies with which nurses move and how “their own work of recording and translating their nursing into organizational texts articulates those bodily concerns and tasks to the conceptual order of the institution” (p. 94). Smith (1987) found herself to be bifurcated in her experiences of being both a mother and a graduate student, and in the moving between the two, both temporally and spatially.

In my experience, the bifurcation of people working in equalities was intense as they tried to negotiate their equalities worldview as well as the Civil Service model. Most of them were personally committed to equality and believed that a more equal Scotland would be a better Scotland, yet they still had to deal with the institutional realities of also thinking of themselves as Civil Servants. For example, the social researchers I dealt with understood and believed that good social research could not be done from a point of complete objectivity and neutrality. They acknowledged that research had a social purpose and researchers imparted their own beliefs in the research process. Yet, at the same time, they had to write up and present research findings in ways that fit in with Civil Service expectations. Generally, they managed this bifurcation with relative ease, helped along by the fact that most of them rarely did their own research but were instead responsible for overseeing contracted research by outside sources.

Yet, as I have shown through discussions of femocrats and the way they negotiate their bureaucratic setting (Chapter Two) and the relationship between change agendas and fossilised norms and bureaucratic practices discussed earlier in this chapter, being a feminist (or any other type of equality) change agent was also a difficult role to negotiate while being part of the Civil Service. Many people came to work at the Executive hoping to be involved in governmental processes that would make positive change for groups they cared about, only to find out that working for the government was not always the best place to do this. A number of people I spoke with expressed their disappointment that they had to subsume their activist selves to their civil service selves, although certainly not everyone felt this way. The Frog Story and ‘tipping point theory’ that I describe in Chapter Five where people who come to the Executive from an outside perspective either leave almost immediately because they cannot accept the bifurcated reality or they stay and attempt to negotiate the two worldviews of the Civil Service and equalities, highlights the difficulties of being a change agents inside the institution.

The idea of bifurcation also has an explicit focus on the body and its place (or lack thereof) in competing worldviews. Both Campbell and Smith speak of moving between one world which is engrossed in bodies and another which separates itself from bodies. For Campbell’s nurses, their everyday work was immersed in the world of bodies, sickness and caring but the conceptual order of the institution translated the bodies out of the organisational texts about the patients (Campbell, 2006). Smith’s (1987) bifurcated reality was between the world of babies and tending their bodies and the mind-world of higher education. In the Executive, the equalities worldview encompasses the world of bodies in the sense that it views citizens as sexed, gendered, raced person, while the Civil Service worldview attempts to maintain disembodied notions of the ‘public’. Chapters Five and Seven present examples of the how the Civil Service model maintains its power and how change agents represent different worldviews. Bifurcation helps explain the reasons why equalities and gender mainstreaming advocates are forced to manoeuvre these two worldviews as they attempt to bring bodies to light within the Civil Service Model.

Enacting this process of moving between a worldview which places great emphasis on the embodied experience and one which does not results in embodied consequences for change agents in the Executive. I found that constantly managing competing worldviews takes its toll on those who do it everyday. Theorizing bifurcation gives a name to the process of institutional struggle being played out in the everyday lives of change agents. This helps

explain why, institutionally, we have seen such high rates of turnover and burn out among those who work with change agendas (Chapter Five). I argue that not being aware of this human cost is one of the reasons that the gender mainstreaming agenda is failing. While gender mainstreaming came out of the realization that gender had to be changed at the structural level, it failed to recognise the continued importance that individual agents who support gender change would have on actually implementing and institutionalising the change in organisations. Thus, the agenda, at either the local or global level, does not accommodate the embodied costs that it places on individuals responsible for making it happen.

Bifurcation really allows us to see the power of the institution encouraging people to subsume their personal selves to the discourse of the institution. I suggest that bifurcation results in real and embodied struggles for those who have to deal with it, and believe it is one of the reasons that people hit a tipping point and have to make the decision of whether or not they can continue to manage competing worlds and discourses. For some people, this is too much and thus, like the frog, they jump out immediately. Others do manage to deal with the bifurcation and negotiate the worlds. In this negotiation, what is sometimes evident is some slippage between the two worlds, where spaces are opened and people can take advantage of their equality/feminist/activist selves to make a difference within the institutional discourses. For example, my research colleagues were able to take advantage of the requirements of the Gender Duty and start the Analytical Services Division working group on equalities research. This allowed them a cross-departmental meeting space to talk about equalities, research methods and ways of implementing mainstreaming within the division. Taking advantage of these spaces is important to maintaining the balance between the two worlds, and are helpful in making equalities people work within the Civil Service.

The concept of bifurcation highlights the costs that come with trying to implement gender mainstreaming, or any other guided change project, and gives me a way to analyse the consequences of these costs. As with other feminist and social justice projects, people who study gender mainstreaming have pointed to the high rates of turnover and burnout in those who are responsible for working with gender mainstreaming. The constant struggle of being the person who is responsible for bringing about change to an inert and stable institution can be overwhelming and frustrating. Even those who are strongly committed to equalities personally can find that their background and commitment is not enough to sustain them in the face of the Civil Service model and worldview, and thus they rotate out of equalities work into other areas of the Executive or leave the organisation. Of the women I worked most

closely with in the Research Branch, none remain in the Branch. Most have used maternity leave as a way out of the Branch and then returned, if they returned at all, to another area of social research. In the Equality Unit, individuals rotate through different teams as a way to alleviate the stresses of bifurcation. Others feminists I knew have been seconded to London or have left the Executive to work in civil society. The reality is that being a change agent is hard work and the stress and embodied cost of doing that kind of work is high.

The work on femocrats by Chappell (2002, 2006), Eisenstein (1996), Franzway, Court and Connell (1989) and others suggests that claims of positive outcomes from feminist engagement with the state and bureaucratic institutions should be approached with caution. There should be hesitancy in suggesting that “feminists will always be successful or are on an unswerving trajectory towards ‘progress’” (Chappell, 2006, p.231). It has been noted that there is a complex relationship between individual change agents and their actual ability to enact change within political organisations, but the focus has remained on the institutions’ responsibility for this. There has been little theorizing about why this occurs from the change agents’ perspective. I suggest that the concept of bifurcation gives us insight into this process of bringing change into a bureaucracy and into the associated costs on individuals like gender mainstreaming advocates. Bifurcation allows us to see just how much unanticipated work goes into sustaining a change agenda, and why the constant struggle to maintain momentum for this agenda results in such a heavy burden for those responsible for it. Not only are these change agents battling structural and organisational norms and practices which hinder their success, they embody this struggle within their very selves. People in the Executive who are loyal to both Civil Service and equalities worldviews are in a constant struggle to accommodate these divergent and often contradictory loyalties. The stress of enacting both worldviews can lead to burnout and turnover, as the work of being bifurcated becomes too much and people are driven out of their work.

This negotiation is played out on the everyday level as people go about their work; it is also enacted institutionally as policy and research attempt to bring together equalities and activism under the guise of the Civil Service model. This was seen most clearly when the mainstreaming team did training sessions with other departments in the Executive to guide them on becoming compliant with Gender Equality Schemes and what needed to be done to be in line with the Gender Equality Duty. As demonstrated in Chapter Five, the naming and framing strategies that were used at these training sessions required gender experts to subsume the gender discourse to one that resonated more with the Civil Service model.

I argue that in the formation of the gender mainstreaming agenda at the international level there was not enough attention paid to the processes which would need to occur for gender mainstreaming to be implemented at the local level. In the excitement over an agenda which promised radical change to the structures and outcome of policy, the costs to the individuals who would actually be responsible for the oversight of this agenda were not deliberated adequately. The evidence of this is in the absence of the discussion regarding the human costs in the literature on gender mainstreaming. Given the salience of the issue to mainstreaming advocates and gender experts themselves, it is surprising that it has not been pursued as an area of study. There has not been a synthesis of the lessons learned by the femocrats and their interactions with the state into what we know about the experiences of those who 'do' gender mainstreaming. My theorisation of bifurcation addresses this gap and provides another reason for why the radical potential of gender mainstreaming has not been realised. It accounts for the experiences of individuals and also has implications at the institutional level. It draws attention to the fact that gender mainstreaming, as a policy strategy and agenda, too often pays too little attention to the individual experiences of enacting the gender mainstreaming agenda.

Conclusion

Using the thematic chapters' data to ground my analysis, I have gone beyond a description of the everyday experiences of people working on gender mainstreaming and the Gender Equality Duty in the Scottish Executive. There is a recognition that an institutional level understanding of what happens to the radical promise of gender mainstreaming is needed. I argue that recognising the paradoxes of gender mainstreaming suggests that contradictions are fundamentally built in to the ideas and conceptualizations of gender mainstreaming. These limit the agenda's ability to be implemented in any real, radical way. I also suggest that bifurcation limits actor's abilities to enact radical change and that regulatory frames and fossilised norms translate change agendas into acceptable institutional practices. All of these limitations reduce the efficacy of individual change agents and of exogenous pressures concerning gender equality. Ultimately the success of gender mainstreaming is hindered by all of these factors.

I recognise the paradoxical nature of gender mainstreaming as a true barrier to radical change. Actors must strategise ways to incorporate gender equality policies into existing institutional contexts. However often these attempts result in slight modifications which are acceptably appropriate within the institutional status quo. Instead of working towards radical change, these practices take up the discursive and material space which could be used to transform the Executive. Paradoxically, the process of institutionalisation becomes inherently de-radicalising. Using the institution to institutionalise change is based around fitting radical ideas in to ones which can become part of the institution. Simultaneously, the institution's insidious use of practices which promote change in small ways hides the lack of movement on the part of the institution towards radical change. When seen together, these processes highlight issues important to solving the radical potential problem.

Secondly, I focused on a discussion of the importance of fossilised norms in organisations where gender mainstreaming has been implemented. I elaborate on Benschop and Verloo's concept of fossilised norms and suggest that norms such as patriarchy and gender neutrality are key barriers to radical change. Within the Executive, there are places where gender and equalities change happens. However, this change is always bounded by the limits of trying to work from within the organisation. There is also good work being done beyond the doors of the Executive, which is also helping to facilitate positive gender and equalities change. Yet, as shown, exogenous pressure to change is also limited in its potential because it also gets altered through the institution. This is not to suggest that change does not occur. But it is a complex and negotiated change, whereby the radical nature of the agenda gets diluted through the processes of coordination and translation.

I theorized the process of bifurcation as a way to understand better the human costs related to the continued reliance on gender experts and mainstreaming advocates in the Executive. The failure of gender mainstreaming to actually move beyond those already doing the job has embodied costs for those doing the work of mainstreaming. Mainstreaming advocates suffer high rates of stress and burnout because they are required to negotiate competing worldviews, languages, and delivery goals, and they and their work is often rendered illegitimate in the life of the organisation. This accounts for the high rate of staff churn that is seen in the departments associated with equalities. I argue that these costs were not taken into account in the early thinking about gender mainstreaming, and the subsequent consequences of them on the radical success of the mainstreaming agenda took activists and academics by surprise. Work on femocrats clearly indicates many of the same embodied costs that I attribute to

bifurcation. A return to the lessons learned from the femocrat strategy can help clarify understanding of the human costs of enacting change in organisations.

This chapter has focused on analysis the data presented in earlier chapters from a wider perspective to elaborate on the radical potential problem of gender mainstreaming. In the next chapter, my conclusion chapter, I relate the discussion of gender mainstreaming in the Executive to the wider gender equality landscape and suggest that the resistance we see to change that is inherent in the Executive is part of the larger relations of ruling which work against positive gender change in society. I conclude with feminist advice and suggest areas where this research can be developed.

Conclusion: Convergences, Contributions, and Continuances

Leaving the Scottish Executive on my last day was not nearly as memorable as the first time I entered the building. I said goodbye to my co-workers, took my few papers that I thought I would need for the research and walked out past the wall with the funny shapes for the last time. I stopped at the security desk in the entrance hall and handed in my security pass and walked down to the bus stop to catch my ride home. My time at the Executive came to an end when no one in the organization could find a way around the fact that I was an American citizen trying to work for the British Civil Service. We had avoided the legal ramifications of this by hiring me on a student placement, but once that was over, there seemed to be no way to keep me on a contract. However, when I left there was this amorphous sense that I might be back if someone found a way to keep me on. There was no leaving do, no event to mark the conclusion of my nine months as an employee and researcher at the Executive. There was very little issue for me as I turned my attention back towards being a PhD student, towards data analysis and writing.

I left just while the Mainstreaming Team was refocusing and deciding on its new path. I left as many of my female colleagues got pregnant and decided not to return to the difficult world of equalities. I also left right before the May 2007 elections, which brought the Scottish National Party into power. The consequences of this on equalities and gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive are beyond the scope of the thesis. However, leaving the Executive as an employee did not prohibit my continued interest in thinking about what lessons the organization could learn in order to keep moving in the right direction in regards to gender equality.

Gender Mainstreaming at the Scottish Executive

Nominally, this project is an analysis of the practices and procedures involved in implementing and institutionalising aspects of a gender mainstreaming approach at the Scottish Executive during a particular time from mid 2006- early 2007. More fundamentally, however, my research is concerned with gender practice in organizations and change in

institutions. It is informed by a feminist international relations outlook which advocates a deeper understanding of international systems and change through paying close attention to the everyday lives and experiences of women and men who are both impacted by, and have an impact on, global systems. I am particularly interested in what happens to guided change agendas in political organizations. I argue throughout the thesis that state bureaucracies are an important, and perhaps under-developed, site of investigation by feminist IR because state organizations are a site where exogenous and endogenous change efforts come together. In the case of gender mainstreaming, this is particularly important because the worldwide policy of gender mainstreaming has targeted state bureaucracies specifically. It is important to understand the processes of implementing gender mainstreaming through an analysis that keeps the people doing the work of mainstreaming at its centre, but also moves the focus outward to the organisational and global levels. In the thesis, I discuss both the micro and macro levels of politics in an analysis which furthers our understanding of the processes of attempted change via the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy in one particular state bureaucracy, the Scottish Executive.

Gender mainstreaming is an important part of the global gender equalities landscape. It has been called “a global strategy for achieving gender equality” (True, 2003, p. 369) and, especially when it was first adopted by the 1995 UN Beijing Platform for Action, it was seen as a “strategic tool at the global level to transform policy and the unequal relationship between women and men” (p. 370). It was presented by feminists as a transformative strategy that would introduce gendered perspectives into the policy making process by making visible the gendered norms which underpin the process (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2000; Mazey, 2000; Verloo, 2001; Woodward, 2003, 2008). As I highlighted in Chapter One, there have been struggles around definitions, especially pertaining to the idea and concept of the ‘gender’ in gender mainstreaming (Baden and Goetz, 1997; Morgan, 1996), and the best strategies for implementing the agenda. However, this has not prevented a rapid worldwide acceptance of the strategy by individual governments, supra-state organisations, and global governance bodies. Yet, as I point out throughout the thesis, implementing and institutionalising a gender mainstreaming agenda is bound and constrained by the fact that the strategy attempts to change political organisations by utilising the same processes, procedures and structures which strategy is focused on changing.

Often times, there is an expectation in organisations that ‘doing’ gender mainstreaming is the same as implementing other agendas. However, the experiences of those trying to do gender

mainstreaming better highlights that this attitude is simplistic. Gender mainstreaming is, in fact, not like other policy agendas because it is based in a feminist agenda aimed at radically restructuring the gendered nature of the bureaucracy. When done ‘successfully’ it would rework the attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms upon which an organization is built. It asks everyone, not just equalities or gender experts, to rethink their gendered personal politics. It requires that organizational practices which are firmly entrenched in traditional gendered ways are reconsidered and changed. It demands that the causes and consequences of masculine power be addressed and subverted. Getting this ‘done’ is not a simple task. As this thesis shows, a focus on technocratic tools and strategies is not enough to ensure the full realization of mainstreaming’s radical potential because the deeply embedded gendered aspects of bureaucracies continue to maintain the status quo and frustrate radical change agendas like gender mainstreaming.

Convergence of Gender Regimes

A comparative analysis of the implementation and institutionalisation might lead to the expectation of a large amount of variation in the process of gender mainstreaming in governmental organisations. Indeed, Beveridge, Nott and Stephen (2000b) claim that their review of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in various countries “reveals wide variations in how exactly mainstreaming has been implemented” (p. 266). Different political organizations have dealt with mainstreaming in different ways, each responding to its unique situation and history of gender equality policies and practices. Using Connell’s concept of gender regimes, we can assume that each organization has its own gender regime, made up of specific gendered relations that structure practices specific to that organization (Connell, 2006a). However, while it is true that countries and organisations represent a wide variety of legal and political landscapes, the more surprising revelations are in exactly how similar the process of mainstreaming is across organisations. An aspect of my conclusion is that comparative analysis suggests a convergence, rather than the expected variance, of gender regimes among varied countries and organizations where gender mainstreaming has been attempted. The unique contributions of my thesis regarding the pervasive ‘stickiness’ of gender in bureaucracies and the embodied costs on mainstreaming advocates should be contextualised within this converging landscape.

Comparative studies of gender mainstreaming present a complex picture of the successes and failures of the approach in a variety of settings. Various comparative studies of gender mainstreaming in Europe, and throughout the world, highlight common barriers faced by those trying to implement gender mainstreaming. Woodward (2008) reviewed eight comparative studies to determine the extent that new gender mainstreaming approaches are being integrated in government and to reveal if the concept of 'gender' being used has moved beyond a simple understanding of gender-as-women. She found that gender mainstreaming faltered in its beginning years in all countries since "the concept of gender was either seen as vague or was wilfully misunderstood" (p. 291), and that generally only gender experts could articulate a relational, developed understanding of gender. To most other policy actors "the term 'gender' was more or less equivalent to 'the woman problem'" (p. 293). Squires (2007b) cites Pascual and Behning's study which finds that gender mainstreaming in European employment policies does not fundamentally question policy and practice, but rebrands and continues previous policies where women are the subjects, not active participants in mainstreaming (p. 152). A 2007 Swedish study comparing gender mainstreaming in EU member states to identify 'progress, obstacles and experiences at the governmental level' found that "lack of political will, unclear instructions, difficulties with the concepts, lack of gender equality knowledge, resources, training, systematic structures and lack of gender equality goals" (Sterner and Biller, 2007, p. 40) all prevented the implementation process. They also found residual passive resistance by managers and senior governmental officials due to their lack of gender knowledge and feelings that mainstreaming is not politically important (p. 40). Perhaps most relevant to this study, they also found a "discrepancy between the written commitments from the highest political level...and the activities actually carried out in the governmental organisations" (p. 40). Again, the existence of similar barriers to those experienced by the Scottish Executive was found across a variety of countries and organisations.

Comparison also reveals the places where gender mainstreaming has made inroads into changing organizations, policies and processes. Gender mainstreaming has brought the feminist focus back to state-run organizations as places to concentrate energy, it has opened up new discursive spaces to talk and think about gender equality issues (Benschop and Verloo, 2006), and it has encouraged the promotion of new governance tools which enable more people to consider equality and diversity issues (Woodward, 2008). In Scotland and the UK, gender mainstreaming advocates helped bring about the Gender Equality Duty, have trained Civil Servants on gender equality issues, and maintain a watchful presence in both the Executive and Parliament. Although the radical transformation that mainstreaming promised

has not come about, it is possible to see and track positive change for women in political organizations and for gender equality policies.

While comparative studies may not go into great depth about the effects of gender mainstreaming in specific countries,⁹² those that do study specific countries and organisations (see for ex. Beshop and Verloo, 2006 and Woodward, 2008 on Belgium; Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004 on the UK) have very similar results. What I found in Scotland at the Executive, although locally contextualized, fits with the findings from very different countries and organizations. This study of Scottish gender mainstreaming adds to this literature of country-specific studies as many of these same obstacles were found in the Scottish Executive. For example, there exists the tendency to conflate women and gender, to experience a disjuncture between formal commitments to mainstreaming and informal practices in the everyday life of the organisation, and to a continuing reliance on the Equality Unit and gender experts rather than increasing widespread training on gender concepts. The paradoxes which pervade and hinder gender mainstreaming at the Executive can be seen in other settings as well. The successes and failures are similar.

The puzzle, then, is to better explain why there exists this convergence, rather than the expected divergence, among organisations which have attempted gender mainstreaming. What are the common factors which hinder gender mainstreaming's radical potential? My study provides answers to why this is happening. Considering the vital aspect that bureaucracy played in my findings, I conclude that these studies resemble each other because their bureaucratic roots lead to similarities in their gender regimes. Recognizing these resemblances has implications for policy and practice, as it provides insights in to areas where gender mainstreaming may be struggling across organisations.

Examining this question using the results of my own study and those of others, I found some common messages about why institutionalizing gendered change is so difficult. First, Civil Service or other organizational practices of neutrality and objectivity work against an equality perspective which requires a different focus on subjectivity and difference. Second, fossilized norms concerning gender, including a commitment to gender-blind policies, people's personal politics and the continued existence of old-fashioned patriarchy, continue to pervade

⁹² Although the Swedish report comprises both survey data and in-depth studies of Finland, Lithuania, Portugal and Sweden.

organizations and effectively hinder change. Third, although this is changing with legislative duties, gender balanced budgets, and other formal requirements to layout and assess progress on gender equality, there is a continued reliance on ‘soft’ measures for implementation and institutionalization which lack ‘teeth’ and support.. Lastly, there has not been enough attention paid to the embodied costs of doing gender mainstreaming on gender mainstreaming advocates. Surprisingly, the lessons learned from other feminists who have been engaged in change agendas in bureaucracies – femocrats – have not been utilized in helping to better understand stress, burn out and churn in mainstreaming advocates. These lessons demonstrate ways that institutions play a significant role in organizing and/or restructuring gendered social relationships and reflect the reality that organizations make up and take part in a global gender order which is still resistant to radical gender change. By paying more critical attention to these issues, practitioners of gender mainstreaming should be able to better understand the role that their institution is playing in the process of gender mainstreaming and policy can continue to address bureaucratic barriers to gender equality.

Further Research

I believe that the recent turn in the literature towards a critical perspective on gender mainstreaming as the ‘answer’ to problems of gendered change in organizations is welcome and needed in the larger discussion of global equality policy and politics. This recent literature on gender mainstreaming is much more cautionary about the possibilities of this policy than earlier reviews. While exploring the ways that gender mainstreaming has been successful, especially in opening up the space to talk about the role of organizations in upholding inequality and by reengaging feminists with state institutions, the current literature maintains a far more critical and nuanced approach to mainstreaming. I believe this turn is needed as we continue our search for ways to sustain positive gendered change. Gender mainstreaming does not have all the answers and we must maintain a critical view of the paradox of institutionalizing gender using the already gendered mechanisms of institutions.

While I continue to defend my method as an effective way of researching the questions and puzzles that interest me, I also recognize that any research project could be improved. I would suggest two main changes to take this project forward. The first would be to spend more time in the Equality Unit. I attempted to arrange to spend time working with one of the branches of the Equality Unit, but was unfortunately not able to obtain access. Additionally, I

recognize that spending more time with the policy unit associated with gender mainstreaming would have helped to contextualize and provide a comparison for my experiences in the Research Branch. These experiences might have provided a deeper understanding of the everyday work going on to implement the policy. Connected to this, there needs to be more thinking about the connections between everyday work and actual policy outcomes. There needs to be more research on what the outcomes are in regards to the policy-making process which gender mainstreaming is attempting to change.

Also, it is important to recognize that gender mainstreaming is a long-term goal and policy process. As such, it is still quite new in relation to equal opportunities legislation and policies specifically targeted at women to combat their disadvantage. Thus, while feminist academics are already beginning to be critical of gender mainstreaming, this move amongst feminist scholars is a relatively quick shift in thinking. We need to recognize that policy colleagues will not be able to move as quickly, due to the practical nature of how long it takes for any ideas like this to influence policy thinking and the policy cycle. A focus needs to be retained on the realities of gender mainstreaming in government, while creative methods to transform gender equality policies need to be encouraged.

In addition, there needs to be a recognition that the debate surrounding gender mainstreaming – at least in academic circles – has moved on to the diversity and intersectionality debate (see for example, Eveline, Bacchie and Binns, 2009; Lombardo and Meier, 2006; Squires, 2005b, 2007b, 2009; Verloo, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). This certainly impacts the way that academicians view gender mainstreaming and its potential for radical change. The move away from the ‘silos’ approach towards a diversity approach answers the challenge that gender mainstreaming does not address intersectional oppression. Yet, implementing a strategy that provides a “truly integrated analysis, one that systematically captures the interstices of all factors of oppression” (Hankivsky, 2005, p. 993) is difficult, especially as most organisations have approached diversity mainstreaming as an additive task. Therefore, a further study of the Scottish Executive as an organisation which consciously developed an equalities mainstreaming approach from the beginning could provide interesting insight into the possibilities of equalities mainstreaming. However, the important discussions of the consequences of this shift on each individual branch of equalities research (gender, race, sexual orientation, etc) need to continue. There is merit in acknowledging intersectionality and researching the implications it has on the equality landscape, but there is also room for continued research on each specific equality issue.

For myself, this thesis reflects my commitment to a long term research agenda which is interested in governmental organizations, the people who work in those organizations, and institutional change. As such, I am interested in continuing to use institutional ethnography in politics and policy. I would like to continue to develop the interdisciplinary links with other institutional ethnographers, and develop a clear theory which supports the use of institutional ethnography in the discipline of political science. As part of an activist commitment to furthering equality through my work, I am also committed to research which analyses change. I would like to carry on research in institutional ethnography to that focuses on the more theoretical aspects of the method and to connect it more closely with politics and feminist politics. I think there needs to be a stronger link made with the policy process by having a more explicit focus on exploring how investigating the processes of political organizations gives us insight into the outcomes of the policy making process. Empirically, the next step in developing this method will be to use institutional ethnography in other international organizations and on other policy areas. Institutional ethnography is attracting the attention of feminist political scientists (see for example Eveline, Bacchi, and Binns, 2009) and others involved in interpretive policy analysis and I would like to be an integral part of this developing discussion.

Summary

In Chapter One, I argued that since state bureaucracies have been targeted by gender equality advocates as the spaces to implement gender mainstreaming policies, paying attention to the literature on gender, work and organisations – specifically that which looks at feminist engagement with bureaucracies – is critical to our understandings of gender mainstreaming. I argued that gender mainstreaming advocates can learn from previous feminist attempts to engage with the state. Specifically, examining the successes and challenges of the femocrat strategy can direct us toward a better understanding of what happens to the radical potential of the mainstreaming strategy. I also traced the development of gender mainstreaming through Rees' 'tinkering, tailoring, transforming' device and maintained a critical focus on the what 'gender' has meant throughout the history of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

In Chapter Two, I focused specifically on the history of gender mainstreaming in the UK and Scotland. I pointed out where the gender mainstreaming strategy in the UK and Scotland

follow global trends, and where they differ. I also highlighted the importance of devolution in the development of a broad-based equalities mainstreaming approach in Scotland. I followed the development of gender mainstreaming through the Gender Equality Duty. Chapter Three elaborated on how using the method of institutional ethnography allowed me to study the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming from the local, everyday level. I laid out key terms and concepts, and described what a successful institutional ethnography looks like. I also detailed the specific methodology that I followed during my fieldwork.

In Chapter Four, I described the everyday work that goes on in the Equalities Unit and the Equalities Research branch. I highlighted the work of mainstreaming advocates and described their attempts to implement various aspects of the gender mainstreaming strategy. I traced how the work of gender mainstreaming is done in 'fits and starts'. This is due, in part, to the fact that mainstreaming advocates' work life was subsumed by various other aspects of work that were not directly related to the substantive work of the gender mainstreaming agenda. These other types of work included external relations, administrative work, branch/divisional/departmental caretaking, the work behind socialising and the work that goes into 'doing nothing'. Participating in all of these types of work made up the daily experience of 'doing' gender mainstreaming for mainstreaming advocates in the Executive. I suggested that my work reflects a more complex version of organisational life than theories of implementing gender mainstreaming generally take into account, and that paying attention to the everyday experiences of doing different types of work allows a deeper perspective on areas where the mainstreaming process is effective, as well as where it is constrained. Since mainstreaming advocates contributed to all these types of work, the impact of work greatly influenced the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. Chapter Four sets the scene for the following two chapters, which focused on the actors and practices important to the gender mainstreaming agenda in the Scottish Executive.

Chapter Five explored actors importance to gender mainstreaming. I presented data on the strategies they employ, as well as the dilemmas they face, in implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming in the Executive. I presented evidence of gendered actors in the Executive, and examined the ways that men and masculinity matter to the agenda. Data in this chapter suggested that mainstreaming actors and allies deal with unique bureaucratic barriers, competing worldviews and staff churn which they must negotiate to be successful. They address these concerns with strategies which included the naming and

framing of mainstreaming in ways which help them negotiate the bureaucratic culture. Yet, strategies were not done unilaterally. Mainstreaming actors constantly debated the best way to push forward the mainstreaming agenda and acknowledged the dilemmas faced in using soft measures of mainstreaming. Importantly, this chapter highlighted the continued importance of mainstreaming actors in the process of implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming.

Chapter Six moved the focus away from data which highlighted actors, and examined data which underlined the importance of practice to the gender mainstreaming agenda. I presented evidence of the ways that Bureaucratic practices shape gender mainstreaming and change efforts in real and meaningful ways. I provided data which highlighted the Civil Service Model as containing gendered practices which greatly impede the implementation and institutionalisation of mainstreaming in the Executive. I suggested that Executive hierarchies and gendered ways of working contributed greatly to barriers within the bureaucracy, and I traced the ways that practices of semantic slippage continue to hinder the radical change agenda promised by gender mainstreaming. I acknowledged the complex ways which Bureaucratic practices impacted and shaped all efforts to do gender mainstreaming in the organisation.

Chapter Seven returns to the fundamental question that this thesis examines – why has radical gender change not come about in the Scottish Executive, regardless of the efforts to implement and institutionalise gender mainstreaming? In other words, what happens to the radical potential of gender mainstreaming? This chapter broadened the analytic focus beyond the everyday context and practices of the Executive, and beyond the individuals who do gender mainstreaming to an analysis guided by key principles from institutional ethnography. I suggested that the very concepts of gender mainstreaming are fraught with paradoxes which include using the institution to change the institution and the fact that institutionally acceptable practices of change actually maintain the status quo by actively shutting out radical change attempts. These paradoxes played themselves out in the day-to-day implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. I argued that radical work gets translated in to regulatory frames during the implementation and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming. This is done through the coordinating mechanisms of the Civil Service model and bureaucratic practices. I also argued that fossilised norms continue to play a significant role in the puzzle, acting as institutional barriers to radical change. Lastly, I suggested that a

process of bifurcation happens to actors associated with the radical change agenda. The continued focus on actors in the gender mainstreaming agenda led to the unintended consequence of burn-out and slow change, as actors negotiated being both equalities advocates and civic servants. This chapter focused on bringing an institutional level of analysis to the process of gender mainstreaming. My findings reinforce my claim that we cannot understand the workings of organizations without taking into account gender, nor can we attempt to change gendered practices at the local or international level without understanding the ways in which organizations and institutions play a large role in mediating this change. Guided change agendas, like gender mainstreaming, are frustrated at the everyday level because they are constantly being coordinated to more powerful agendas which maintain the status quo.

Chapter Seven began the process of connecting Scottish Executive-specific findings into the web of ruling relations which guide the organisation. Looking even further up and out, I argue here that these findings, while specific to the Executive, resonate with findings found in various state-based organisations which have attempted gender mainstreaming. I suggest that gender mainstreaming has fallen short of its radical promise as a global policy agenda because it is attempted in state organisations which share bureaucratic similarities. An examination of gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive in comparison with other states highlights startlingly similar results. When this occurrence is examined using the framework of ruling relations, a convergence becomes apparent which has consequences for the broader gender equality landscape.

Contributions

This thesis brings together multiple levels of analysis to provide insight into the efforts to implement and operationalise gender mainstreaming, a guided change agenda, through a case study of the Scottish Executive. I examine the process of gender mainstreaming with the help of literatures based in gender, work and organizations and institutional ethnography. I take seriously the idea that uncovering and paying real attention to the everyday work of actors can help explicate wider truths about change and political processes. My thesis addresses the everyday experiences of ‘doing’ gender mainstreaming at the local level (in this case the Scottish Executive) and traces the ways these experiences are institutionally coordinated to the global gender equality policy landscape.

Past studies have not placed enough value on the ‘stickiness’ of gender to the institutional context, the everyday practices and the actors in organizations. Benschop and Verloo (2006) allude to this in their concept of the genderedness of organizations, but they conclude that “gender mainstreaming is not breaching the genderedness of organizations in the way it aspires to, precisely because it involves the inclusion of regular actors” (p. 31). I develop this idea further and suggest that it is not just the inclusion of regular actors which prevents gender mainstreaming from moving beyond the genderedness of organizations, but that a whole range of factors makes the genderedness of organizations ‘sticky’ and difficult to transcend. Inhetveen (1999) also addresses these concerns in her discussion of institutionalising gender equality through gender quotas. She suggests that the goal of institutionalisation is to make behaviour into something ‘taken-for-granted’ by “connecting the institution to cultural values” (p. 405). My study highlights instances of this in strategies used by mainstreaming advocates, but explains that the process of ‘successful’ institutionalization of the gender mainstreaming agenda is much more complex. To enculturate mainstreaming would, in fact, dilute the radical feminist intentions behind the agenda and not pay enough attention to the everyday gendered realities of the organization.

Other studies of gender mainstreaming also under-theorize the embodied costs of being a change agent. They allude to the stress and high-rates of turnover by those who work in equalities, but have not been able to adequately explain the reasons for this. Using the institutional ethnography idea of bifurcation, I am better able to articulate some of the reasons why being a change agent is so difficult. Equalities, mainstreaming or gender advocates must constantly negotiate competing worldviews, rationalize their approach, practice and knowledge to a suspicious audience and, at times, compromise their own personal views to maintain legitimacy. I bring this idea of bifurcation together with the literature regarding femocrats and their experiences as change agents in state organizations, which is an under-utilized resource for understanding actors and their ability to enact the gender mainstreaming agenda.

My study contributes to literatures on gender mainstreaming and gender, work and organizations. It also makes a strong interdisciplinary methodological contribution with its use of institutional ethnography. Ethnography generally is a well-known approach to social science research, particularly in anthropology and sociology, but it is not often used in political science or international relations. Though there is some evidence that this is

changing (Enloe, 2004; McNabb, 2004) it is still an underused method in these disciplines. A review of the literature shows few political scientists who are actually doing ethnography. There are many examples of political anthropology⁹³ and several interdisciplinary works from sociology, cultural studies, and geography which deal with politics and political issues, yet few come from within the traditional discipline. It is very telling of the place of ethnography in politics when in 2002 Denzin (a prominent thinker in qualitative methods) writes that qualitative research generally, and ethnography specifically,

has made significant inroads into many social science disciplines, including English and comparative literature; sociology; anthropology; psychology; history; education; communications; consumer research; social work; community health; cultural, environmental, and disability studies; and qualitative medical research (p. 483).

While many of its sister disciplines show up, politics is nowhere to be seen on this list. This has changed in more recent years, with the increased focus on qualitative and interpretive methodologies and methods (Bevir and Kedar 2008, Yanow, 1996; see also Klotz and Lynch 2007, Prasad 2005), but these methodological approaches are still a minority in the field.

Thus, this thesis provides evidence that using ethnographic methods such as institutional ethnography can greatly bolster the empirical knowledge in political science generally, and in the study of governmental organizations and institutions more specifically. Ethnography can help political scientists see the everyday world of the institutions they study, giving them a unique lens through which to better understand larger issues central to the study of politics. It is a method that foregrounds the individual in systems, processes and relationships but still articulates a connection to larger topics of power, oppression, subversion and change. This thesis demonstrates that the use of ethnography in politics is a potent way to explore micro-level political issues, particularly demonstrating the possibility of using institutional ethnography in political science research. Institutional ethnography provides an effective way to operationalise and analyse multiple levels of practice from a gendered perspective, while maintaining a clear focus on praxis and research integrity.

Feminist Advice

⁹³ See Greenhouse, Mertz and Warren (2002) *Ethnography in Unstable Places* for a good collection of essays.

Most feminist research projects carry with them a sense of praxis, whereby theory and practice come together in an effort to evoke positive change. Institutional ethnography highlights the importance of this idea in that projects should start from the problematic which “sets out a project of research and discovery that organized the direction of investigation for the standpoint of those whose experience is its starting point” (Smith, 2005, p. 227). Working from the problematic allows the researcher to foreground the experiences of those being studied and provides a framework which ensures that the research is practically useful when it is completed. In my work, the problematic for the people I worked with in the Executive – the people whose experiences I studied – was *how do we do gender mainstreaming better?*

Throughout my time there, I worked on finding strategies to do gender mainstreaming in a more effective way to ensure that the gender mainstreaming agenda really did result in more gender friendly policies. The Analytical Services Division Working Group on Mainstreaming Equalities, for example, was one strategy which researchers on the Mainstreaming Team implemented as a way to do mainstreaming ‘better’. They hoped the Working Group would bring expertise from across the Executive together to share information, strategies and common issues and allow people working disparately on mainstreaming to find common ground. Implementing the Gender Duty, gender equality schemes, and providing high level statistics on gender equality were other examples of strategies which the Mainstreaming Team used to ensure that they were ‘doing mainstreaming better.’

Yet, having gone through the course of the research, I find this problematic more difficult now than I did at the beginning of the project. The difficulty is that the question of how do we do gender mainstreaming better or more effectively or more successfully gets at the heart of the problem of gender mainstreaming. This problematic is searching for the ‘best way to implement’ a strategy which is ultimately attempting to dismantle the available best ways of implementation. It is a bureaucratic, Civil Service type of question which suggests that implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming is like any other process in the Civil Service which can be done effectively and easily once best practices are identified. As proved throughout this thesis, however, successfully implementing and institutionalising gender mainstreaming is unlike other processes. The radical feminist intentions built into the idea of gender mainstreaming calls for a re-articulation of the gender regimes of bureaucracies. To do gender mainstreaming ‘successfully’, would mean that individual actors, organisational practices and institutional norms would have to be re-imagined from a gender-aware perspective and this is not an easy task.

Wrapped up in the problematic of doing gender mainstreaming better is the bureaucratic bias for the use of technocratic tools and strategies as the way to implement policy. As this thesis shows, and as proved in other research, the radical potential of mainstreaming can not be operationalised with only a focus on technocratic tools and strategies. While these will continue to be developed and institutionalised throughout the policy making process, they need to be developed in conjunction with a better understanding of the gendered nature of bureaucracies and of the problems associated with the paradoxes of the agenda. They also need to be developed outside of the Equalities Unit. A better approach will be to build on the cross-cutting and interdepartmental work that is being done in the Executive. The Equalities Unit can assume a clearinghouse role for gender and equalities work being done by others throughout the organization, rather than doing it all through the Unit. They can provide support, training and resources while recognizing that aspects of gender mainstreaming need to be ‘mainstreamed away’ to the rest of the organization. This allows technocratic tools to be used to help validate the mainstreaming agenda, but also become a part of the process of renegotiating the more nuanced aspects of the gendered organization.

There is also an implicit expectation inherent in this problematic that by doing gender mainstreaming better, the policy can then be successfully implemented resulting in the ‘gender equality issue’ being taken care of and finished. While those working on the mainstreaming agenda recognize that mainstreaming is one of many long-term approaches to helping move to gender equality, this type of problematic suggests that for some, doing gender mainstreaming better means getting it accomplished faster. This ignores the findings from this thesis that the deeply embedded gendered aspects of bureaucracies continue to entrench the status quo and frustrate change agendas. Rather than approaching mainstreaming as something which results in ‘sorting out’ gender equality, thus putting unfair pressure on equalities advocates who recognize that gender mainstreaming is part of the long term agenda to succor equality, a better approach would be to combine some of the positive aspects of working in a bureaucracy. Clear goals and tangible outcomes can become strategies with a valuable focus. This reduces the strain on those doing the work of gender mainstreaming by giving them a framework for assessing their success. It acknowledges the radical vision of gender mainstreaming, but makes it more approachable and doable for those involved.

Based on the experiences of gender mainstreaming advocates in the Scottish Executive, I now realize that the answer to the problematic is more complex than I originally thought. This is

because the problematic is itself a result of the paradoxes that come with attempting bureaucratic change by using the bureaucracy itself to make the change. However, this recognition does not mean that implementing the gender mainstreaming agenda cannot be done in a ‘better’ way which accepts the complexities of the agenda, makes room for moving mainstreaming away from those already involved in it, and recognizes the work of gender mainstreaming advocates while making it easier for them to succeed. Utilizing the expertise of those in the Equalities Unit while also ensuring that the policy gets ‘mainstreamed’. is necessary. Clear focus, tangible goals, and assessment practices are important to the success of the gender mainstreaming agenda. An acknowledgement that this policy does not solve the problem of gender equality and a recognition that it needs to be used in conjunction with tinkering and tailoring measures is also crucial. Building on the findings of this thesis and of comparative work done in other organizations throughout the world, gender mainstreaming can be done ‘better.’

This thesis claims that the gender mainstreaming agenda continues to underperform in regards to its radical potential. Exploring the everyday banalities of work practices and knowledge, pleasurable gendered patterns, and day-to-day organisational processes highlight the problems that individuals have with gender mainstreaming and help explain why the strategy has not lived up to its promise for transformational change. However, I have also shown that ‘doing’ gender mainstreaming has opened up important spaces for gender equality and change to be considered. Thoughtful and committed individuals continue to do the important work of ensuring gender equality. This study of gender mainstreaming in the Scottish Executive presents an insight into the everyday world of ‘doing’ change in a state bureaucracy, illuminating the importance of considering the multiple levels involved in the process.

Appendix A: Criteria for Excellence

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

The point of trustworthiness and authenticity is to establish that the researcher and the research are believable and credible. This highlights that “qualitative rigor has to do with the quality of the observations made by an evaluator” (Patton, 2002, p. 575). For a project to be trustworthy and authentic, the writing should reflect a balanced account that takes into multiple perspectives, interests and realities. Fairness is used as a criterion and the assumption is that the writer presents all sides of a case in a conscientious manner (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). This criterion fits with my own perspectives of researcher responsibility. It highlights the connection between the researcher and the research process and brings out and holds up the researcher as integral to the quality of the project. Using the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity demands that I, as the researcher, and you, as the reader, think about the ways that I made decisions about the approach, acted throughout the process, and wrote up the project. These should be visible and credible.

Sampling

Sampling in qualitative research is not done in the same way as in quantitative or survey research. Qualitative research uses purposeful sampling methods which focus on relatively small samples chosen because “they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The logic of this, as opposed to statistical random sampling which seeks to control and eliminate bias in the research, is that the sample is chosen because it is information-rich and able to provide in-depth, specific and particular understandings of the topic, the question, or the group being studied rather than empirical generalizations (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). There are various sampling strategies which can be used⁹⁴ and often researchers use a combination of strategies. My study, like many ethnographies, used opportunistic sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which allowed me the flexibility to follow new leads and take advantage of opportunities as they arose in the Executive. I also used some snowball sampling, where I asked people for recommendations on others with whom I could talk and work. Ethnographers must “rely on their judgment to select members of the subculture or unit based

⁹⁴ See Miles & Huberman (1994) p. 28 for a typology of sampling strategies. Also, Patton (2002) p. 231

on their research questions” (Creswell, 2007, p. 128). Using my research puzzles surrounding gender and everyday practices as my guiding principles, I followed various leads as they came up and attempted stay open to new possible routes of investigation.

Saturation and Coding

Saturation in qualitative research is the point where the researcher no longer finds new information to add to the investigation. Saturation is a concept developed by grounded theorists as a way to ensure validity during the analysis (Creswell, 2007); for ethnographers, saturation signals the end of the fieldwork phase. At this point, the researcher begins to hear the same stories or see the same practices repeatedly and in such a way that they no longer add more to the study. Saturation is closely related to the process of coding and sorting through evidence, as the researcher must be aware of the stories that the data is beginning to tell in order to know when saturation has occurred. In my case, I began the mental process of coding from the beginning of my pilot study and analyzed emerging themes at the end of the pilot. I focused on those themes, while staying open to new opportunities, during the fieldwork stage of my ethnography. Saturation occurred towards the end of my time in the Executive when I began to find the same stories and practices being repeated.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a way of testing validity whereby various methods of data collection yield identical findings, suggesting replication is integral to successful research. Like other qualitative researchers (see for example Richardson, 1994; Bloor, 1997), I have reservations about the appropriateness of the term triangulation. Coming from the stance that research and data is shaped by the particulars of the situation, it seems to me difficult, if not impossible, to expect perfect replication of findings even using multiple methods. I prefer Richardson’s concept of crystallization, which relies on the concept of the crystal to “combine symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shape, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities and angles of approach” (Richardson, 1994, p. 522). This allows me to elaborate on no single truth about my topic, but instead show a deeper, more complex version of the answers.

Reflexivity

As Creswell (2007) writes, “no longer is it acceptable to be the omniscient, distanced qualitative writer” (p. 178). Reflexivity has taken on a central role in qualitative research. Conversations about the importance of reflexivity and how far it is possible to be fully self-

aware and critical permeate the literature⁹⁵, but there is a general consensus that good qualitative research should present the situations and contexts that lead an author to make particular decisions and write particular conclusions, and that the author has a responsibility to attempt to understand his or her own presence in the work. Specifically, “the ethnographic ethic calls for ethnographers to substantiate their interpretations and findings with a reflexive account of themselves and the processes of their research” (Altheide and Johnson, 1998, p. 292). My reflexive process has occurred throughout my research, starting with an investigation of my own worldview that I brought with me to the project, continued throughout my field notes as I took note of my own reactions, questions, and surprises as I carried out my ethnography, and should be reflected in my writing practices and decisions throughout the final PhD. Being reflexive is not just needed for good writing, but is also central to the identity of the qualitative researcher. Since I identify as such, I continue my efforts to be aware and critical of my engagement with the project.

Rich and Thick Description

While the other criteria for excellent research can be applied to any qualitative research project, this one is more specific to ethnography. Excellent ethnographies should provide descriptions which are thick and rich in detail and provides specifics about the culture or place that was studied (Ponterotto, 2006). There is debate about the purpose of this description, ranging from a traditional approach which advocates that “ethnographers need to convince us...not merely that they themselves have truly ‘been there,’ but...that had we been there we should have seen what they saw, felt what they felt, concluded what they concluded (Geertz, 1988, p. 16) to the constructionist or postmodern belief that “a writer presents a *version* of the world” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995, p. 66, italics authors’ own) which is contingent upon choices that she makes throughout the research and writing process. I believe that good ethnography does give the reader a sense of being part of the place where the study was conducted through thick and rich description, but I also acknowledge that my description is based on my own interpretation of events, and that someone else could interpret the same situation in a different way based on their own experiences. However, while someone else may interpret the data differently, the description should allow them to recognize my account as plausible. The analysis and interpretation of ethnographic description is just as vital as the thick and rich descriptions.

⁹⁵ See for example, Seale, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 for discussions about reflexivity in general; see Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995 for an ethnographic specific discussion see Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995 for an ethnographic specific discussion.

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